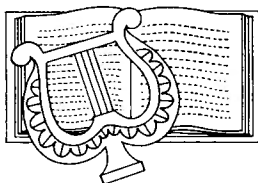


THE DEMONS OF THE SEA



Emory University Library



In Memoriam

Ruth Candler Lovett

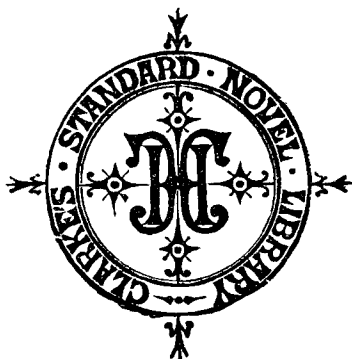
1935-1964



THE
DEMONS OF THE SEA.

BY
W. STEPHENS HAYWARD,

AUTHOR OF "THE BLACK ANGEL," "THE STAR OF THE SOUTH,"
"REBEL PRIVATEER," "FIERY CROSS," ETC. ETC. ETC.



LONDON:
CHARLES H. CLARKE, 9 RED LION COURT,
FLEET STREET.

CONTENTS.

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|--|------|
| I. Francis Drake and the Miser | 1 |
| II. The Slaver | 6 |
| III. Bully Dick catches a Tartar | 9 |
| IV. Drake to the Rescue | 17 |
| V. The Jeweller and his Daughter | 30 |
| VI. The Gold and Emerald Ring | 38 |
| VII. Julia finds a Champion | 48 |
| VIII. The price of a Life | 53 |
| IX. The "Enterprise," and her Crew | 60 |
| X. The Orange Grove..... | 66 |
| XI. Don José de Castanaros | 72 |
| XII. Don Placido Ortigoza | 78 |
| XIII. "Cain, where is thy Brother?" | 85 |
| XIV. The treachery of Don Placido | 92 |
| XV. The kindness of Don José | 99 |
| XVI. Spanish Treachery..... | 110 |
| XVII. The Abduction | 138 |
| XVIII. The Rescue | 146 |
| XIX. The Brother's Curse | 157 |
| XX. The Man who leaped from the Window | 177 |
| XXI. The Story of the Man who leaped from the Window | 184 |
| XXII. The Journey to the Gold-Mines | 197 |
| XXIII. The Oasis in the Desert | 204 |
| XXIV. How the Creeping Snake Revenged himself for his former Defeat | 209 |

CONTENTS.

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|--|------|
| XXV. Doomed to Death | 213 |
| XXVI. The Rescue | 218 |
| XXVII. A Band of Brothers | 227 |
| XXVIII. The Return of the Corsair—Attack on the Spanish Galleon | 235 |
| XXIX. A Strange Meeting | 247 |
| XXX. The Council | 252 |
| XXXI. Love and Friendship | 258 |
| XXXII. The Ransom | 274 |
| XXXIII. Don Placido's Despair | 283 |
| XXXIV. Fire and Sword | 289 |
| XXXV. The Corsairs' Nest | 303 |
| XXXVI. The Three Ships | 307 |
| XXXVII. The Hour of Vengeance | 314 |

THE DEMONS OF THE SEA.

CHAPTER I.

FRANCIS DRAKE AND THE MISER.

MOSES MAGRATH was a noted character of the town, or rather village, of Margate. His wealth was great, as was also his parsimony. Miser and money-lender, although often sought by the embarrassed and needy, he had but few friends. In a small, low, dirty-looking house, in a narrow and dark street, lived this worshipful individual. In a badly furnished, ill-lighted back room, the old miser transacted his business. All day long, like a spider in his web, he remained at a small deal table, waiting the coming of those who needed his assistance.

A ring came to the door.

"Who is that, Anne? Look from the window before you open," he said, in a sharp, harsh voice.

"It is young Francis Drake, master. Shall I open the door?"

"Humph!" grunted the old Jew; "Francis Drake, eh? Wants more money, I suppose. No matter—you may let him in, Anne."

"Well, Captain Drake," said the old man, when his

visitor was ushered in, "what can I do for you? I thought that the payment of that loan was not due till next week. But no matter; money is short, and I shall be glad to receive it now; for, you know, 'short reckon-ing; make long friends.'"

"I am sorry, Mr. Magrath, that I cannot oblige you; I called for quite another purpose; it is on business of another nature, I am sorry to say."

The speaker was a tall, fair, handsome young man. Though scarcely twenty years of age, he was the captain of a small craft trading to the coast of France. People hinted that the nature of this trade was not such as would bear inspection; in short, that the *Julia*, as his little craft was called, had frequently on board a freight which was never destined to pay the King's customs. Francis Drake was not, however, a professional smuggler; whether he ever did run a contraband cargo was best known to himself; certain it is, however, that the custom-house officers, with all their vigilance, could never succeed in detecting anything of the kind.

Among the seafaring population of Margate, the young sailor was held in high esteem for skill and daring. On one occasion, he had put to sea in his little craft, to aid a vessel in distress, when not another man in the town would venture with him. He and his two brothers went alone, and returned, bringing with them the crew of the endangered vessel.

Let us see what business Francis Drake, the young sailor, has with Moses Magrath, the money-lender.

"Take a chair, Mr. Francis," said the old man, scrutinizing his visitor closely, "and let me know your business; for time is money, and life is short."

"My business, Mr. Magrath, is, then, briefly this •

instead of coming to pay money, I come to ask of you a great favour."

"A great favour! and you cannot, then, pay me the money?" said Magrath, testily;—"you cannot pay it? How am I to live, and pay my debts, if people do not pay me? I am a poor man, Mr. Drake, a poor man—and money is money; so, I pray you, see and pay me."

"Mr. Magrath," said the young man, "you know how I am situated. The last few trips I have made in the *Julia* have not been profitable; the crops on my mother's farm have been very bad; the earnings of my brothers have been small. At present I cannot pay you. I come to ask your forbearance and your aid."

"My aid! What, more money? It is impossible; I have no money—I am a poor man——"

Francis Drake interrupted him.

"Yes, Mr. Magrath, your aid; in return for which I offer you a large share of the profits of the great enterprize I contemplate—an enterprize which cannot fail to make rich as Croesus all those who engage in it."

"Well, well, Master Drake, let us hear this project of yours; then, if I like it, we will see what can be done. 'He is a fool that will not give an egg for an ox,' says the proverb; but it is important first to see our way to the ox. The project—the project! Let us hear this project of yours, Master Drake."

"It is this, Mr. Magrath. I am tired of these petty trips—this coasting work across the Channel and back. If you will furnish me with sufficient money to fit out and freight a ship four times the size of the *Julia*, I will guarantee a return of four-fold the sum."

"But how—how? That is the question. Let me see my way."

"I will tell you. I would make a voyage to South America—to that glorious new country, where gold and silver ores are plentiful as dirt. Hitherto, none but the worthy Spaniards have participated in the riches of Chili, of Brazil, of Peru; I shall be the first Englishman who shall set foot on that rich coast; mine shall be the first English ship which shall return laden with the treasures of the golden land; mine shall be the hand that shall dispute for the spoils of this fair country with the haughty Spaniard. I will hoist the British flag by the side of the Spanish standard, and let those proud Dons know, that where **there** is gold and glory to be won, there Englishmen will be."

Magrath listened to the young sailor in silence, regarding him with an earnest glance of pity and contempt.

"And are you really serious?" he asked at last, with a mocking smile.

"Never more so in my life."

"And do you imagine that a man can be found to advance the money for so wild-goose a chase? How old are you, my friend?"

"Twenty years."

"And you talk of a voyage to South America as a London apprentice would of a row on the Thames. Why, the boy is mad!"

The young man coloured with vexation, and said—

"Pardon me, Mr. Magrath; you have known me for some time, and know that I am a good and skilful mariner, a good seaman, and a good navigator. What, then, is there wonderful in a voyage to America? What man has done, man may do again."

"My young friend, I do not deny that you have courage, skill, and intelligence, even beyond your years; for that

reason I shall not reply to your proposal by a direct refusal."

"Ah!" interrupted the young man, joyfully, "then you consent; you will furnish the necessary money?"

"Not so fast; wait a while. You are young, and though, as I said, brave and skilful, inexperienced. Wait one, two, or three years, then, perhaps, on consideration, I might entertain this project of yours, always providing that I have the money, or can obtain it."

The young man looked deeply disappointed.

"Three years! and in reply to my request, you tell me to wait three years! And the bond which you had from my mother—what of that? Do you consent to wait?—for, indeed, we cannot now pay you."

"The bond—ah! I had forgotten the bond, my young friend. I should only be too happy to oblige you, were it in my power, but I cannot. The bond is not in my hands: I have paid it away with some other securities. It is now in the hands of Aaron Levi, of London."

"And will he insist on payment?"

Moses Magrath shook his head.

"I fear so, my friend. Levi is a hard man, a very hard man; and were I in your place, I would be provided with the money on the day it is due."

"But how—how?" asked the young man, distractedly; "how can we raise four hundred pounds? My mother, my sisters, my brothers—you know they have it not."

The money lender was silent for some time.

At last he said, "There is your vessel, the *Julia*."

"And supposing I sold her, how, then, should I get another?—how should I live? Well you know that the few acres of land my mother and sisters occupy are barely sufficient to support them."

"My young friend, I cannot answer your question. Your conversation is very interesting, but in business time is money. I have some accounts to go over, and must attend to them at once."

So saying, he rose; and going to a large desk covered with papers in the corner of the room, seated himself at it.

Francis Drake, knowing anything he could say to the miser would be futile, turned to leave, sad enough at the failure of his errand.

CHAPTER II.

THE SLAVER.

As he turned to leave the room, and just as he approached the door, it was suddenly opened, and a man walked hurriedly in.

In proportion as the demeanour of Francis Drake had been modest and unassuming, that of the new-comer was boisterous and familiar.

"Hallo, Magrath, you old vampire!" he cried, "how are you to-day? I want some money, and that at once; so make no bones about it, but just write out a receipt for five hundred pounds, hand over the gold, and I'll sign it, and be off on my business."

The speaker was a man rather above the middle height, swarthy complexioned, and strongly built—dressed with a certain amount of elegance, and of rather a pleasing countenance.

At the first words of the stranger, Moses Magrath left his seat, and advanced respectfully to meet him. Bowing lowly, he said—

"Sir John Hawkins—the most honourable Sir John Hawkins—at my humble abode! I am only too much honoured. Pray be seated, sir. May I offer you any refreshment? My house, my cellar, my purse, my person—all are at your service!"

On hearing the name of him to whom Moses Magrath seemed so obsequious, Francis Drake started, and looked ill-pleased. The name was well-known to him, although the bearer was personally a stranger. Sir John Hawkins was the first Englishman who had conceived and executed the project of making his country participate in the enormous profits of the slave-trade until that time exclusively carried on by the subjects of Philip II. of Spain. Sir John Hawkins was a slave-trader.

Paying but little attention to the bows and servility of the old miser, Sir John Hawkins, turning to the young mariner, said politely,—

"Excuse me, sir; I had not seen you before. Perhaps you have business with this old Jew here? Finish your interview; I will wait my turn."

Sir John Hawkins spoke very courteously, and Francis acknowledged his speech by a bow.

Ere he could reply, the old Jew interrupted.

"On my word," interrupted the miser, "you are wrong this time, Sir John. Ask this young man what reply I gave to a proposition he made me."

"What was the proposition, and what was your reply!"

"What he asked of me was, sufficient money to purchase a ship and cargo, in order to make a venture to Peru, and return laden with gold."

"And you replied, I'll be sworn, that you had neither ship, nor cargo, nor money?"

"You are mistaken this time, Sir John; my reply was

a very different one. I said to the young man that I would consider the subject, and possibly, in two or three years' time, when he should have gained more experience, might comply with his wish."

"A magnanimous answer, truly!" said Sir John, laughing, "and worthy of your caution. You would take it into consideration in two or three years! On my word Master Moses, if that is what you call a favourable answer, I wonder what an unfavourable one is like?"

"But, my good sir, consider," said the Jew; "this young man is only twenty years of age—has never been a longer voyage than to Calais or Boulogne—and he asks me for sufficient money to buy and freight a ship for a long and hazardous voyage to South America."

"And why not?" said Sir John; "if the young man is a good and skilful sailor, why should he not navigate a ship as well ten thousand miles as twenty? Captain Drake," continued the slave-trader, turning and offering his hand to the young man, "I have heard of you—I know that you are a daring and a skilful sailor. This old miser, in reply to your demand for a ship and cargo, tells you to wait two or three years: that annoys and disappoints you, does it not?"

"Much, very much, sir; but even that is not all. No matter: I will not weary you with my affairs."

"Well, Captain Drake," continued the slave-trader, "attend to me. Mr. Moses here refuses your request: I will grant it. Not in two or three years, but, if you choose, to-morrow."

The young man gave a cry of joy.

"You, sir? oh, you are very kind; but on what conditions——?"

"Listen: in place of your going in search of gold

to the Spanish possessions in Peru and Chili, you shall accompany me to the coast of Africa—to Guinea or Gambia—whence we will take to St. Domingo a cargo of slaves. The profits are enormous, the risk but little; two or three successful voyages will realize a sum which shall make you the richest man in Kent. What say you?”

Francis Drake replied instantly, and without hesitation, “I thank you, sir, for your offer, but I refuse it. I will never be a slave-trader; the laws of God and man alike condemn it. If you offered me a million of money for every drop of the poor creatures’ blood, I would refuse it. I will never buy and sell my fellow-creatures like dogs. I wish a good day, sir.”

So saying, Francis Drake turned and hurried from the house.

“The fool! the idiot!” cried Moses, after he had gone; “to refuse your generous offer! The ungrateful pauper! He, without a friend, almost without a shilling, to insult your honour by declaring that that trade, which our great and glorious Queen Elizabeth declares to be lawful, is contrary to the laws of God and man! The fool! the idiot—”

Sir John Hawkins interrupted him.

“Hold your tongue, you old fool! It is you who are the idiot, the dolt. Listen to what I now tell you:—that young man, who has just gone out, will some day be one of the glories of England.”

CHAPTER III.

BULLY DICK CATCHES A TARTAR.

“THIS will do, Gideon. On my word, not a very promising-looking hostelry; but as I, and doubtless, thou

art tired, sick, and weary after our rocking and swaying on board yon cock-boat of a hoy, we will e'en make it do."

"As you will, master ; but it seems to me an over-rough place for your honour ; and the company, as I judge by the noise, shouting, and swearing, is scarcely meet for your honour. 'When the wine's in, the wit's out ;' it would ill become you to be led into a brawl in a Margate pot-house."

"Pshaw !" was the reply ; "if you fear to come in, you can stay outside."

So saying, the speaker pushed open the door, and strode into the tavern.

"Afraid !" muttered the other, surlily, who was evidently a serving-man ; "afraid, forsooth ! By the bones of my grandfather, if Gideon Glossop had been troubled with many fears, or a nice conscience, thy dainty bones, Sir Edward, would ere now have been picked by the crows." And Gideon marched his great carcase into the alehouse after his master.

He was right in saying that the company was none of the best. Some twenty rough-looking men were assembled in the tap-room, drinking, shouting, and quarrelling. All had a more or less nautical appearance ; but it would be hard to tell whether they were sailors, fishermen or smugglers.

The appearance of the two strangers caused a momentary silence ; all eyes were cast on the tall form of Sir Edward, who, not even honouring the company with a glance, seated himself in a corner, and calling for a flagon of wine, wrapped his cloak around him, and seemed lost in thought.

As for Gideon, he merely cast a surly, scowling glance

around him, and followed his master's example, calling for ale instead of wine.

It almost seemed that Gideon's words were prophetic ; for they had scarcely seated themselves, when several of the fishermen, smugglers, or whatever they might be, commenced making deliberate and offensive remarks upon the two strangers.

"What gay popinjay is yon?" said one in whose dainty eyes poor men are unworthy of notice?

These and many other remarks were made in an audible tone. However, they produced no effect, apparently, for the master still remained buried in thought, while the servant merely took long draughts at the ale tankard, occasionally scowling round the room like a sleepy bear at the company. At last one of the loudest and most insolent, watching his opportunity, took up Gideon's tankard of ale, and saying to the astonished man, "Here's to your health, comrade!" drained it off.

A loud shout of laughter greeted this trick.

"Bravo, Bully Dick!" cried several.

"Sir," said Bully Dick to Gideon, "it is a custom in this town for all strangers who enter a tavern to treat the frequenters—the old hands. Since you know it, there's no harm in my teaching you."

Loud shouts greeted this speech, which was said with much gravity and politeness.

Gideon took no notice, however, but turning to his master, said,—

"Your honour, this man has drunk my ale."

No reply ; the person addressed still remained buried in thought.

"He don't hear you," said Bully Dick, tauntingly ; "don't you see the gentleman is asleep? With all his fine

clothes, he means to rob our worthy landlord of the price of his bed, and sleep it out on the settle."

"Sir," said Gideon, again touching his master's arm, "they have drunk all my ale."

"Eh! what?" said Sir Edward, suddenly arousing himself. "Drunk all your ale—well, order some more," and again he relapsed into reverie.

Gideon, muttering something to himself in a low tone, ordered the pot-boy to replenish the empty measure. As, however, it was being brought to him, Bully Dick, encouraged by impunity, said to the lad,—

"Here, my boy; these worthy gentlemen don't know that it is a custom in Margate for strangers to offer the company the tankard before drinking themselves. Bring here the tankard."

The boy seeing that Gideon and the strange gentleman had put up with the first insult, thought that doubtless they would likewise bear this. But he was mistaken. Sir Edward had aroused himself from his fit of abstraction.

Gideon glanced towards him, and caught his eye.

He made a sign with his hand.

Instantly Gideon bounded between the boy and Bully Dick, who held out his hand for the tankard.

"No, you don't, my lad," said Gideon; "that's my master's ale, and I mean to drink it."

"What the devil's the meaning of this?" said Bully Dick; "Let the boy pass with the beer, you great oaf. Don't you know the custom of the place?"

"Look here, my man," said Sir Edward, rising, "the meaning is this: I perceive that you are one of those insolent fellows who require correction——"

"Oh, indeed! correction!" sneered the bully; "and

who's going to correct me, Mr. Popinjay? Yourself, perhaps?"

"Me? No, indeed; I would not soil my hands with your dirty carcass. I have to do with higher game than such *canaille* as you."

"Perhaps, then, it is that great bullock before me who will give me a lesson?"

"That is as I please," said the stranger, quietly; "but I warn you, for your own sake, to shun a quarrel with him; because that 'bullock,' as you call him, will toss you on his horns in a manner you will little like."

"Oh! he will, will he?" said Bully Dick, contemptuously. "Let us see—and then, when I have disposed of him, we will see what you are made of, my fine bird."

"A ring—a ring! make a ring for Bully Dick!" was the cry.

Soon a ring was formed around the two combatants.

Bully Dick was a notorious pugilist, and, presuming on his strength, and the skill which practice had given him, thought he had an easy victory. He was strong, nimble, and hardy, and knew all those dodges and tricks familiar to ancient as well as modern pugilists.

This being the case, the greater part of the company thought he would achieve an easy victory over the other.

But there were some who surveyed the brawny arms, the bull neck, and, above all, massive, broad chest of Gideon with some misgiving as to the result. Nor did the cool, deliberate manner in which the Cornishman rolled up his shirt-sleeves—displaying the tough muscles, which stood forth almost in lumps on his rough, airy arms—reassure them. They had seen such men before—men the very type of an Englishman—lazy, inert, and stupid,

somewhat slow to engage in a fray, but very, very much slower, when once engaged, to come out.

Bully Dick stripped off his jerkin and shirt, and threw them behind him.

"Ain't you going to strip?" said one of the smugglers to Gideon, seeing that he contented himself with merely rolling up his shirt-sleeves

"There's no need for it," said Gideon, lazily; "this affair won't take long, I trow."

"Let the fool go his own way," said Bully Dick, sneeringly; "perhaps he thinks to save his body by keeping his clothes on? No matter—I can afford him the advantage."

So saying, the speaker stepped into the ring, put himself into attitude, and contemplated his adversary with a look of the greatest contempt.

And, in good truth, to a judge of the art of boxing, the appearance of this latter was sufficiently ridiculous.

Gideon lumbered lazily into the ring, with folded arms, and, advancing close to Dick, said, "Now, I am ready."

"Put your hands up, man!" shouted several, in derision, seeing that he still kept his arms folded carelessly across his chest; "he'll kill you!"

"All right," again repeated the Cornishman; "I'm ready."

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth before Bully Dick dashed out his left hand full at the face of his foe.

Gideon started back to avoid it; but so quick and true was the hit delivered, that it took full effect on the mouth, making his teeth rattle. A crimson stream of blood followed the blow instantly.

A shout of triumph from Dick's partisans.

A cry of rage from Gideon. By the force of the blow he had been driven back to the very wall. Suddenly re-

covering himself, however, he hurled himself full on his adversary.

In vain Dick guarded, retired, and hit out twice, each time cutting open the Cornishman's face, and making the blood fly ; still the other pressed on to the grapple.

Dick retreated to the very wall.

One more blow he dashed on the other's face, when Gideon was upon him.

In an instant the heavy arms of the Cornishman were around him, with a terrible hug like that of a boa-constrictor.

In vain he struggled and gasped. Tighter, still tighter, grew that terrible hug.

At last the Cornishman got his left arm around the other's neck. If Dick's case was bad before, it was worse now.

Freeing his right arm, Gideon, still holding him in a vice-like grasp, commenced pommelling the face and body of the pugilist.

Thump, thump, the blows resounded on the body and face of Bully Dick. The blood spurted out in copious streams, the eyes puffed up and swelled almost instantly under the terrible visitations of Gideon's right hand.

Desperately the other struggled to free himself—in vain !

"*That's the Cornish hug !*" grunted Gideon, sarcastically. "How do you like it ?"

Dick made another desperate struggle to free himself ; he was almost successful. Gideon shifted his grip, but it was only to obtain a fresh one.

"And this is the Cornish back-throw !" shouted Gideon Glossop, having obtained the desired hold. Then Bully Dick's legs went high in the air ; helplessly as an infant he was flung over the other's hip, and was thrown on his

head and shoulders to a distance of some spaces, where he lay, a stunned, bruised, and bleeding mass of humanity, utterly insensible.

"There," grunted Gideon, wiping the blood from his own face; "I think I have taken the conceit out of your bully. Would anyone else like to try a bout?" And the burly Cornishman glared around like a bear who has tasted blood.

"Foul play!" shouted several; "foul—it was a foul grip!"

"Yes, foul—foul! Down with him!"

A friend of Dick's now rose, and pointed to the bully's senseless form, addressed the company.

"Comrades, Dick has been beaten, it is true, but not fair. This big brute gripped him foul. Am I right?"

"Yes, yes—foul! Down with the great brute! Split his head open! Down with him!" shouted several, crowding around Gideon, who, backing up in a corner, stood at bay. He had armed himself with the leg of a settle, which had been broken in the scuffle.

Several of the smugglers—for such they were—armed themselves with whatever they could find, and prepared to throw themselves on the Cornishman.

Suddenly the stranger bounded to his feet, and dashing through them, shouted—

"Cowards! Six to one! Do you call yourselves Englishmen?"

"Down with them!" cried one of the nearest, aiming a blow at the speaker.

Instantly, with the quickness of thought, this latter struck the man full in the mouth with the pommel of the short heavy sword he carried; then he placed himself with his back to the wall, by the side of his servant.

"Come on," he cried, "all of you, and I'll let some of your blood out!" At the same time he made his sword whistle in the air.

For a moment the others hesitated. They did not like the look of that bare steel, nor did they fancy the ease and skill with which the stranger wielded it.

They well knew that at least one of their number would certainly be run through the body.

Suddenly a pistol was fired by one of them. The ball passed through the hat of the stranger.

"Gideon," said the latter, "we must fight our way out, or we shall be shot down like dogs. These ruffians have firearms."

Then shouting aloud, and waving his sword, he prepared to cut his way through them, or fall in the attempt.

"Stand back, you paltry cowards," he cried, "or I'll spit you like larks! A Dudley—a Dudley to the rescue!"

CHAPTER IV.

DRAKE TO THE RESCUE.

SCARCELY had the stranger, who was called Sir Edward, shouted these words, than two men dashed through, and ranged themselves by his side.

They bore a striking resemblance to each other; they were evidently brothers.

"Shame on you, cowards!—shame on you!" cried one; "seven of you to two, and one unarmed. Fall back, and let these gentlemen pass, or it will be worse for you!"

Already, however, the nimble sword of the stranger had

wounded two of his assailants. These, smarting with rage and pain, still pressed on.

"Down with them!" cried one of these, presenting a pistol, which, however, one of the two brothers struck up; "down with them, and down with the brothers Drake, if they take their part."

"Down with the brothers Drake," shouted another.

Still, however, the four men kept their enemies at bay.

But, now, with cries of "Down with the brothers Drake!" more than one pistol is produced and primed.

Suddenly a fresh actor appears on the scene.

"Who says, 'Down with the brothers Drake?'" he cried, pushing his way through them. "Down with the Drakes, eh? We will see. Here is yet another brother Drake. Stand back, you ruffians — down with your pistols," and the speaker, snatching one from the hands of the nearest, hit him a blow across the head, and advanced menacingly towards the others.

"It's Captain Drake," muttered several; "Captain Francis Drake."

Strange to say, they seemed cowed at once.

These rough, drunken, and furious men recognized a master spirit, and fell back abashed.

"Down with your pistols!" continued Captain Drake, glancing round with flashing eye at those who had produced firearms; "down with your weapons, every man of you!"

Slowly and surlily they obeyed.

"Now, what is all this about? Speak, some of you!"

"Why, that fellow there fought with Bully Dick, and has wellnigh killed him."

"And is that any reason, curs that you are, that you should all of you set upon this man?"

Then, turning towards the stranger and Gideon, and bowing politely, he said,—

“Sir, I hope these fellows have not injured you in any way—the ruffians! I have a great mind to give some of them a lesson!”

There was no fear now of a renewal of hostilities; so he whom Gideon had called Sir Edward, advanced, and lowering his sword, said,—

“I thank you, gentlemen, for the assistance you have afforded us.” Then to his late adversaries,—

“Men, I warned your friend Dick that in my servant he would find a tough customer. He did not choose to take my warning, and he has reaped the consequence. This man, Bully Dick, deserved some punishment for his insolence. Perhaps, however, my servant, in his just anger, inflicted a more severe one than he deserved. Such being the case, and as I see that he is not dead, though so bruised about the face as to render it difficult for his mother to recognize him, I, of my own free will, and with no fear of you or twenty other such cowardly ruffians, will give him something to pay the surgeon’s bill, for, if I mistake not, that last fall disjoined his shoulder. Here, fellow,” continued the speaker, addressing Dick, “here are a dozen crowns for you. Profit by the lesson you have received, and beware another time how you insult a gentleman or his servant.”

Dick, who had recovered and gathered himself from the ground, took the money willingly enough, and slunk off to get his hurt shoulder attended to.

And so the affair terminated. The stranger, inviting the three brothers who had so gallantly come to his assistance to join him, seated himself again at the table, and called for wine.

"Thank you, sir," said Captain Drake, in reply to this invitation ; "you are very kind ; but my brothers and myself are obliged to return at once to Ramsgate."

"Ramsgate !" exclaimed Sir Edward, joyfully ; "I also am going there, in order to get a vessel for the coast of France."

Captain Drake thought for a moment.

"In that case, sir, it is fortunate I saw you. Since you wish to go to France, I will myself take you in my little craft, if it pleases you."

"If it pleases me ?" said the stranger, joyfully. "Certainly it pleases me. And so you are the captain of the vessel ? Nothing could be more fortunate. Now I hope you and your brothers will partake of some refreshment before we start, since I am to be your passenger. Gideon, get some more glasses, and another bottle—quickly. At what hour shall we sail, Captain Drake ?" he continued.

"At any time you please."

"I am not pressed for time ; so, if you have any arrangements to make before starting, you can do so."

"I have no business to attend to, sir," was the reply ; "but since you are so complaisant, I will go first to say a few words to my mother before setting out." Then turning to his brother : "I have seen Magrath, Michael, and the answer I bring to our mother is—*There is no hope.*"

This was said in a very mournful voice ; and, to the astonishment of the stranger, he perceived that the eyes of Captain Drake were moist with tears.

"Strange," he thought, "that this young man, before whose glance those drunken ruffians shrank back in fear—strange that he should be thus soft-hearted as a girl ! There must be some mystery here."

Francis Drake remained for some time leaning his head on his hand, apparently in deep grief. Suddenly he aroused himself, and, filling his glass, said,—

“Pardon me, sir. I was forgetting that the troubles of poor devils like myself could not interest a gentleman such as you. Here’s to your health, gallant sir, and a pleasant voyage across the Channel. But, as for that, you may set your mind at rest. The wind is fair, and mine is a gallant little craft. In three hours from the time we sail, I will land you on the coast of France.”

The stranger nodded his head carelessly. “In three hours, six hours, or six days—it matters not to me ; so that I arrive there some time, I care not. Come, let us set out for Ramsgate. What is the distance, Captain Drake ?”

“Four miles.”

In half an hour more, the three brothers Drake, Gideon, and Sir Edward were on the road to Ramsgate.

They walked in silence for some time, the brothers leading the way, while the Cornishman and his master brought up the rear.

Presently the latter, quickening his pace, overtook the brothers.

“A word with you,” he said to Francis, who had been called Captain Drake.

“One word, two words, a hundred words, if you please,” said Francis, leaving Michael and George, and falling back.

“My name is Sir Edward Dudley,” said the stranger ; “I am a gentleman—I am rich ; I understand, or fancied I understood, that you had some grief or sorrow on your mind. You said that you must take back word to your mother ‘there is no hope.’ Just now you said that the troubles of poor devils like you could not interest a gentle-

man like me. Well, supposing you are wrong, and that your troubles do interest me—that for reasons of my own, on account of the gallant manner in which you came to my assistance to-day—from fancy, caprice, what you will—your troubles do interest me, and that I am disposed to assist you—to be a friend, a father?”

“You, sir,” said the young sailor; “and why should you assist me? why should I find in you a friend—a father?”

“That is my business,” was the reply; “it is enough that I am willing so to do—that I am willing to be your friend.”

“Sir, I thank you for your good wishes. I but just now was refused by one man that which I asked, and was compelled to refuse it when offered by another.”

“Well, let us come to the point. What is this which you require?”

“I will first, sir, with your permission, say a few words of myself. I am the son of a worthy but poor clergyman of this county. Five years ago he died, leaving my mother, myself, two brothers, and three sisters, in great poverty. By the kind assistance of friends my mother was enabled to take a small dairyfarm, on which she and my sisters live. I and my two brothers, as the readiest means of contributing to the general fund, embraced a seafaring life. I was but fourteen when I went to sea with the captain of a coasting vessel, with whom I remained for four years. At the expiration of that time my old captain, having realized a competence, resolved to retire. He said to me, ‘Francis, it is now your turn to be captain; that little vessel in which we have braved so many storms together, is yours; take her, and good luck go with you.’ This was in 1561. I was eighteen years of age at the time, and when

I found myself captain of a vessel my own property, I thought I had nothing more to desire in the world. My two elder brothers, Will and Michael, joined me, and for two years we traded backwards and forwards between this and the coast of France. During this time we made some unfortunate ventures ; twice our little bark was dismasted in a gale, and she was so much injured as to render it necessary that we should have her docked and repaired—a very great expense, and one we could ill afford. To add to our troubles, a creditor of my poor father's, of whom we had long lost sight, suddenly appeared and demanded from my mother payment of the large amount still due to him. What was to be done ; we had recourse to a money-lender ; at exorbitant interest we borrowed four hundred pounds for six months, trusting that during that time something would turn up which would enable us to repay him. Alas ! since then things are rather worse. The bond falls due in a few days, and our only chance of paying it is by selling my poor little craft ; and then—and then, sir, what are we to do ?”

“Cheer up, my young friend,” said the stranger, “we will see what can be done presently. I am well disposed towards you. I am a gentleman ; I am rich, and—why should I hesitate to say it ?—I am generous. So, once again, cheer up, and continue your narration. What is this project of which you spoke just now ?”

“It is one, sir, perhaps perilous, but which if executed will make the fortune of myself and the man who joins me in it. You are aware, sir, that Spain is mistress of half the New World discovered by her. Spain has the exclusive monopoly of penetrating the interior of Peru and Chili, to procure the gold and silver which is there so abundant. And is there no means of procuring a part of that gold and

silver? Are the Spaniards alone to grow rich from the spoils of the new land? No! There is a means at once simple and honourable, by which I trust to enrich myself and comrades. It is by commerce. Hitherto the Indians have received nothing but chains from their conquerors in exchange for the wealth they have given them. Well, what I wish is to alleviate the sufferings of these unfortunates by allowing them to participate little by little in the benefits of civilization. My cargo should be composed of all sorts of merchandize suited to their use, but principally of articles of the necessity. When first Pizarro and his companions first discovered Peru all they had to do to procure as much land as they wished was to make the Indians drunk; far be it from me to resort to such disgraceful means. No; once again, I repeat, it is as an honest trader, in good faith, that I should wish to land on the coast of South America. Nor should I lose by such a course, I feel sure; for the Indians, seeing the benefits they received, would become our friends, our allies. Who knows but that, profiting by my example, the cruel Spaniards may not discover a better mode of utilizing their conquest than by transforming the men of the New World into slaves and brutes?"

Francis Drake awaited anxiously for an answer.

"What sum," said Sir Edward, "should you require to carry this project of yours into execution?"

Francis hesitated before he replied to this question. He knew that the answer would prove the sincerity or otherwise of his new acquaintance.

Observing his hesitation, Sir Edward said,—

"Would two thousand pounds suffice to equip and freight a ship?"

"Two thousand pounds!" cried Drake, in astonishment;

"if I had but the half of it I should consider myself only too fortunate. I should be able to say before very long to the father of my Julia, 'You have promised me your daughter when I am rich. I am rich—give her to me.'"

"Ah!" said Sir Edward, smiling, "there is love in the case, I perceive. It is not so much for the bright ingots of the Spaniards as for the bright eyes of the fair Julia that you wish to voyage to the New World."

Francis coloured. "And is it a crime, sir, to love?"

"Sometimes," muttered the stranger, sadly, in a low voice; "sometimes, alas! it is." Then aloud—"No, my young friend, it is no crime to love one who is worthy of you, and of whom you are also worthy."

There was a silence of some minutes—the stranger seemed again buried in a profound reverie.

Suddenly he aroused himself. "Are we not nearly at our destination?" said he. "What place is this before us?"

"That is Ramsgate, and yonder, on the outskirts, is my mother's house."

"If it is not disagreeable to you, I should like to be presented to your family. I wish to see more of you and your brothers."

"You do me and them a great honour by saying so, sir."

"And then, if also not disagreeable, we will pay a visit to the fair Julia. I am curious to see your choice, my friend," said Sir Edward, smiling.

"With all my heart, sir. Julia is as good as she is beautiful, and will be pleased to see a gentleman who is about to do me so great a kindness."

Sir Edward now left his companion somewhat abruptly, and rejoined his servant Gideon, who was walking some twenty paces behind.

Francis Drake looked after him, and muttered to him

self, "I wonder if this gentleman is amusing himself at my expense. By heavens ! I am in no mood to be played with, and if I thought so it should fare ill with him, or my name is not Francis Drake. But no—I can scarcely believe that ; his manner is frank, kindly, and open. But then, two thousand pounds ! It seems, indeed, strange that he should be willing to entrust such a sum to a stranger. No matter ; we shall see."

The party had now arrived at his mother's house. Francis opened the wicket, and followed by his brothers, entered the little garden in front.

"This way, sir," he said to Sir Edward, who, thus invited, entered the garden and approached the door, which Francis opened.

Mistress Drake and her daughters were seated at dinner. On seeing that her sons brought a stranger with them, she arose.

"Mother," said Francis, "I have brought with me a gentleman who is going with me as a passenger to France. He has expressed great interest in my affairs, in return for some slight aid I and my brothers rendered him. Doubtless he and his servant here will partake of some refreshment."

"Sir," said the worthy lady, "you are welcome to our humble abode and humble fare. Louisa, my child, two more covers as quickly as possible, and get from the cellar a tankard of old ale. Sir," she said, addressing Sir Edward, "you must excuse our poor fare ; we have neither choice dishes nor costly wines to place before you. You see the dinner—the ale will be here soon."

"Indeed, madam," said Edward, gallantly, "I must be an epicure indeed could I not content myself with so good and wholesome a repast as I see before me now, especially

in such charming company as that of these young ladies, whom I presume to be your daughters."

"You are right, sir. This is my eldest daughter, Mary—this my second, Amy—and this one, who will now fill your tankard, is my youngest daughter, Louisa."

Sir Edward took the cup from the last-named young lady, and bowing, said—"Fair ladies! Misses Mary, Amy, and Louisa, I drink your healths; and yours also, my brave young friends," turning to the brothers, "as also that of your worthy mother."

All the young ladies were handsome, but Sir Edward was particularly struck by the gentle Amy, an adorable little blonde of seventeen.

"And which of these three young ladies and four boys is your favourite, Mistress Drake?" said Sir Edward. "I should imagine it would be difficult to give one the preference over the other?"

"You are right, sir," said the mother; "they are all alike my children, and all possess an equal share of my love; but it is not so with the Captain here—I mean Francis, for we call him the Captain—though he is the youngest of my sons, with the exception of Harry. It is not so with him, sir. He has no eyes nor ears for any of his brothers and sisters, except little Amy here and Harry."

Amy nestled close up to her brother Francis, taking his strong hand in both hers, evidently pleased at her mother's words, as to Francis's preference for her.

"Fie on you, Amy!" continued her mother, "to steal all your brother's love, to the detriment of the others!"

Amy merely made a charming little grimace, in reply to this, laying her head on the shoulder of Francis, who played fondly with her soft brown hair.

"Four o'clock," said Sir Edward, looking at his watch. "Sir Francis, or rather Captain Francis, is it not time we paid that other visit I spoke of to you?"

"As you please, sir," said Francis; "I have finished my dinner, and am at your service."

In the Drake family no one ever thought of questioning Francis. It was enough that he considered a thing right and proper—so great an ascendancy had he acquired, merely by inherent force of character.

Sir Edward rose, and turning to Mistress Drake, said, "I will not bid you adieu, madam nor you, young ladies, for I trust I shall see you again; for I do not think I shall leave for France before to-morrow, which I trust will suit Captain Drake here equally well."

"It is all the same to me, sir," said Francis; "to-morrow or to-morrow week."

"And to me also," said Sir Edward, laughing. "I suppose I shall land in France some day; but, on my word, I feel in no hurry about it."

Francis thought to himself, "I wonder what object this gentleman has in delaying his journey. Certainly he has some reason. I would give something to know the meaning of this sudden interest, real or affected, which he takes in me or mine. My sisters—ah! they are young and charming!—can he have seen them before? or have heard of their grace and beauty? If I thought so——" and a look came over the young man's face, which boded ill to any one who should presume to address the fair sisters Drake dishonourably.

"I don't think," said Sir Edward, suddenly, as he and Francis went out together, followed by Gideon, "that we want any servant. Here, Gideon," he added, "you amuse yourself for an hour about the town. You will be better

there than waiting outside the house of Miss Julia. What is the young lady's other name, Captain Drake?"

"Julia Ransom."

"Julia Ransom—what a pretty name! and I'll be bound the young lady is also pretty—eh, Francis?"

"Beautiful as an angel, and as good," was the reply.

"She must be good-tempered also," said Sir Edward, laughing, "if she permits you thus to introduce a stranger, without notice, merely from curiosity. What excuse shall you make for bringing me?"

"What excuse!" said Francis, puzzled. "I had not thought of that."

"Well, certainly, it is not customary, I presume, for a lover to bring a stranger to his sweetheart's house merely to show her to him. What is the father by trade?"

"Her father, John Ransom, is a working jeweller. He keeps a small shop in the High Street."

"A jeweller! Bravo! that will do capitally. I want some of his wares. You can say that I am your passenger, and that you have recommended me to him. Thus, you see, there will be nothing extraordinary in my visit; and, having finished business with the father, you can introduce me to the daughter. Eh, what say you?"

"As you please, sir," said Francis; "but we are at the house."

They stopped outside a small shop.

Francis entered, followed by the stranger.

CHAPTER V.

THE JEWELLER AND HIS DAUGHTER.

JOHN RANSOM, the jeweller, of Ramsgate, was a good craftsman, and a fairly good father.

One fault, however, he had, and a very serious one: John Ransom was a drunkard. He drank hard, and he drank gin. To do him justice, however, he had sufficient sense to put some restraint on his inclinations. He only got drunk once a week; but, as that bout lasted two days, and he was two more getting sober, there was not much time left for business. Thus it happened, that, although John Ransom was a good jeweller, and had been well to do, he was now living almost from hand to mouth—just making sufficient during his sober days to maintain himself and daughter Julia in comfort.

John Ransom was not a young man—he was fast approaching his sixtieth year; and he discovered that latterly, during his sober time, he could no longer, with the same ease as formerly, make sufficient money for the next week's carousal and the household expenses.

This grieved him much; for, he argued, "Sooner or later I shall be too old to work at all; what, then, shall I do for my food, my pipe, and my bottle!"

A bright idea struck him: his daughter Julia was young and handsome; she should have a rich husband; and, instead of giving her a dowry, the husband should give the father a good round sum for his handsome daughter.

A capital idea! thought John Ransom; and forthwith he proceeded to act upon it. Francis Drake was almost

the first suitor who appeared in the field for his daughter's hand. John Ransom said to him at once :—

“Young man, I am old, and am not getting younger. I am poor, and even now can with difficulty earn enough for myself and daughter. I must live—I must have my pipe and my bottle. You want my daughter for your wife : well, you shall have her when you can give me a sum of money sufficient to keep me and get me my bottle for the remainder of my life.”

One might have thought that such a proposal would have disgusted a young man like Francis, who considered drunkenness as disgraceful to the character of man ; one would have thought that he would have recoiled with horror from the prospect of having to call “father” a disgusting old sot, going down to his grave step by step ; a laughing-stock to his neighbours—a misery to himself.

But such was his love for the fair Julia, that it overbore every other consideration. His reply, then, to the old man's ultimatum was,—

“Let it be as you say, Master Ransom ; I will become rich ; and on the day I marry your daughter I will give you sufficient to insure you your bottle and pipe for the remainder of your days.”

“Good !” said John Ransom, chuckling. “In that case, my lad, have your own way : the girl shall be yours. But I advise you to make haste in becoming rich, for Julia is handsome and amiable, and some other suitor richer than you may appear.”

“And you would then throw me over ?” asked the young man.

“Assuredly,” was the cool reply. “Life is short ; I am old, and must take my rest and empty my bottle. First come, first served, Master Francis.”



This state of affairs between Francis and the girl was another reason for his anxiety to voyage to the New World in search of wealth. He expected to realize by that voyage a fortune for himself, a competence for his mother and family, and to perform his promise to old John Ransom, and claim his bride.

On entering the little shop, they found the old man alone.

A thin, miserable, decrepit little man he was. Drink and dissipation had done its work ; and he looked even older than time had rendered him.

"Master Ransom," said Francis, "I have brought you a customer."

The old man leapt with unexpected agility from his seat, and placing his spectacles on his nose, took a survey of the new-comer. Apparently this was satisfactory, for he said,—

"Welcome, gentle sir, welcome! How can I serve you?"

"I require," said Sir Edward, "a gold chain by which to suspend my Cross of St. George, and also I wish this ivory miniature to be reset and repaired ; you observe that some of the stones are missing, and you must replace them."

The old man gazed first with wonder and then with blank dismay at the small medallion. The whole stock of his shop would not suffice to purchase one of the missing gems ; nor, indeed, did he know how to procure the gold for a chain, to such rack and ruin had he brought a once profitable business.

"My conscience !" exclaimed Ransom, "but these are bonny gems ; I warrant they cost your honour many a golden pound. And the chain—of what fashion, weight, and quality will you have it?"

"The fashion I leave to you, master jeweller ; as to the weight, it must not be less than ten ounces, and the gold must be of the best."

The old man was completely aghast. Ten ounces of gold—ten ounces ! Why, he had not the wherewithal to buy an ounce.

At last he faltered out, in confusion—

"And when would your honour's lordship require them?"

"Pest !" said Sir Edward, emphatically ; "as soon as they are finished, of course, man !"

"But, your honour," faltered the jeweller, "I am a poor man ; I work hard, but make little profit. I——"

"Well, what is it you want to say ? If you make but little profit, here is a good chance for you ; for as you do your work well, I will pay you well."

"Yes, your honour," said Ransom, colouring up and looking still more confused ; "but the ten ounces of gold for the chain—I am a poor man, and have not the wherewithal to purchase them."

"Soho ! hat is it, is it ?" said Sir Edward, laughing. "A pretty jeweller, forsooth, who has not sufficient gold to make a paltry ten-ounce chain !"

"This must be some great nobleman," muttered the old man ; "he talks of a 'paltry ten-ounce chain.'"

"Well, no matter," continued the liberal customer, "I will give you the money to buy the gold ; I suppose, too, you have not the jewels to replace those missing from the medallion ?"

"Your honour is as wise as he is noble. Indeed, I am but a poor man, and 'twould drive me to my wits' end to procure even one of the jewels."

Sir Edward made no reply, but remained buried in thought.

"Ah! now I think of it," he exclaimed, suddenly, "I have changed my mind."

A look of intense dismay came over the jeweller's face.

"And you will not have the gold chain?" he said, ruefully.

"I did not say that; but now I think of it, this is an out-of-the-way place. I should not like to leave the choice of the mode and fashion entirely to you; I should like to consult and have advice on the matter. You understand?"

"Oh, perfectly, your honour; your lordship is quite right."

"Yes," continued Sir Edward, "I am decidedly of opinion that it would be unwise to leave the choice of the mode and fashion of workmanship entirely to you. Have you no assistants, no workmen, Master Ransom?"

"Alas! your honour, I am a poor man; I do all the work myself. My daughter attends to the shop, and occasionally assists me."

"Ah! your daughter—exactly. My young friend here told me that you had a daughter—Miss Julia, I think he said. Well, Master Ransom, I should like the assistance of your daughter's taste as to the fashion of my chain."

A malicious twinkle might be observed in the old jeweller's eyes, as he replied, turning to Francis,—

"Aha! Mr. Francis, you have been talking of Julia to this gentleman? So you think that, because he has business with the father, he should consult the daughter? No matter; the gentleman should have his wish, but my daughter is not within."

"Out!" said Francis, looking disappointed; "and where has she gone? Will she be long before she returns?"

“Where is she? Will she be long?” said the old man. “Well, as to where she is, she is gone round to a neighbour’s house; as to her being long, see there!” and he pointed through the open window. “Here she comes!”

Looking through the window, Francis and Sir Edward saw a young girl approaching. She opened the door of the shop, and, seeing a stranger, paused for a moment. Sir Edward turned towards her, and regarded her fixedly for a second.

He turned as pale as a corpse, and could not restrain a cry of astonishment.

“What ails you, sir?” said Francis, surprised at the cry and the sudden pallor.

“Nothing—nothing,” murmured the other, still gazing fixedly at Julia. “Strange, strange! it is fated that I am to be the friend and protector of these two young people.”

In the meantime, Julia, agitated, frightened at the emotion her appearance excited in the strange gentleman—at the cry and the sudden pallor—remained on the threshold of the door.

Francis had spoken truly; Julia Ransom was very beautiful. She had large, soft blue eyes, a fine complexion, a straight nose, rich pouting lips; and her fine white forehead was shaded by wavy braids of brown hair. She had an elegant and well-developed figure, with small hands and feet—certainly a rarity among girls of her station.

Sir Edward was the first to break the silence.

“Young lady,” he said, “pardon me for being unable to restrain my emotion on seeing you—I will explain the reason. I see in you the living image of a well-beloved person, whom I have lost, through my own fault, since five years ago. That person is my sister.”

The voice in which Sir Edward said these words, "It is my sister," was so sad, so deeply mournful, that both Julia and Francis felt an emotion of pity. He took one hand of each of the young people.

"There !" he said, with a violent effort mastering himself, and affecting a cheerful tone ; "it is over now. The momentary weakness caused by a sad memory has passed : think no more of it. Master Ransom," he continued, "I think decidedly that it is unnecessary to trouble your daughter about my chain—I will leave it to your discretion. Here are fifty pounds ; go at once and procure the gold necessary for the chain."

The old jeweller took the money, his eyes sparkling at this fresh proof of his customer's liberality. Not that he was blind to the pretext on which he was to be sent out. He knew perfectly well that the strange gentleman wished to be rid of his company, in order to speak to his daughter alone. Now, although he felt ill-pleased at being thus summarily dismissed on so flimsy an excuse, he was too polite to say so. He held the fifty pounds in his hand, and after a moment's hesitation, said, "I will go this instant, your honour ;" and taking his hat, went out, leaving Francis, Julia, and Sir Edward alone together.

Francis had informed Julia in a few words how and where he had met the stranger, and also all that followed, with the promises of assistance made by the latter.

"Young lady," said Sir Edward, suddenly, "you love Francis Drake ?"

Julia blushed, but replied frankly, "I do, sir."

"With your whole heart ?"

Julia and Francis both gave the questioner a half-fledged glance ; then the former replied,—

"I have given my heart to Francis, in exchange for his ; I hope his love will be eternal, as mine will."

"Eternal!" said Sir Edward, sadly ; "is anything eternal or everlasting in this world ? I believe you, young lady ; and for that reason I say, Hope on—hope always."

Sir Edward had again taken the hand of the young girl, and fixing his eyes on her, was about to continue.

All at once he started back—absolutely recoiled from the fair being before him as though she were a hideous object. A strange look of terror and uneasiness was on his face.

"No, no !" he cried ; "this trial is too great for me—I cannot bear it ! I cannot remain here. That likeness—that fatal likeness—it drives me mad ! Francis—Julia—pardon me now ; some day I will tell you all. Adieu !"

So saying, Sir Edward turned from the house, leaving the young people in utter amazement at his strange manner and abrupt departure.

Women—even the most inexperienced—have an instinctive feeling and sympathy for the sorrows of others.

"Why do you wait here ?" said Julia to Francis. "Do you not understand why that gentleman has left so hurriedly ? It pains him to look at me, because I bear a resemblance to a friend whom he has lost—who is, perhaps, dead. Go, Francis ; hasten to follow and console him. Is he not our friend ? Has he not kindly promised to assist you ? Go, then, at once."

Francis pressed his lips on the forehead of the young girl, and hastened after his passenger. He caught him up, when Sir Edward, stopping suddenly in his course, fixed his eyes on the young man's face, and said,—

"Francis, you think me mad or foolish, doubtless ; but I repeat to you, I will some day explain to you the cause

of my strange conduct—of my emotion at first seeing that young girl.”

He then resumed his walk ; and striding on at a rapid pace, they were soon close to the little garden-wicket of Mistress Drake. They heard the sound of merry voices and loud laughter from the interior.

“Hark !” said Francis ; “my brothers and sisters seem to be making merry.”

“And why not ? They are young and light-hearted, and know not the sorrows of this world. Let them laugh and be happy.”

So saying, they both entered together.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GOLD AND EMERALD RING.

AFTER the departure of Sir Edward Dudley and Francis, Julia remained anxiously waiting for the return of her father. Nor was her anxiety without foundation ; for knowing the old man’s unfortunate failing, she had reason to fear lest his propensity should overpower both his reason and honesty, and that he might be tempted to spend a part of the money entrusted to him by his customer.

Hour after hour the young girl remained mournfully waiting for the return of her dissolute father in vain. He came not.

Full of anxiety, her worst fears almost confirmed, Julia felt ready to weep with vexation and shame, when her attention was called to a stranger who entered the shop.

“Good morrow, fair damsel,” he said, in a gay, good-tone ; “I trust I disturb you not. Passing by

just now, I observed the sign over your shop, 'Jeweller and working silversmith.' I have need of the services of some of your handicraftmen, for this morning, by some mischance, this gold and emerald ring fell from my toilet-table, and unfortunately placing my heel on it, I have sadly crushed and bent it. One of the stones, too, has come adrift from its bed, and others are somewhat loosened. Have you any of your workmen about, who can see about it at once, for I prize it greatly?"

The speaker was an exceedingly handsome man, of some five or six-and-twenty years of age. His apparel was costly, and by his general manner and tone he appeared to be a person of quality. His doublet was of the richest silk, and his mantle of the most costly Genoa velvet. He wore a low-crowned, cavalier hat, with a large and sweeping feather.

Around his neck, suspended by a gold chain, he wore what appeared to be a foreign order, while the English Cross of St. George also bespoke a person of consideration.

"I am very sorrow, sir, my father is not within."

"But have you no journeyman who can see to this at once?"

The young girl coloured with shame as she replied—"We are too poor to keep journeymen, sir; my father and myself do all."

The stranger looked annoyed, but gazed with evident admiration on the singularly beautiful girl before him.

Julia remained standing with downcast eyes before her distinguished-looking visitor. She could not but be conscious of his fixed gaze, and looked half-vexed, half-confused.

"Humph!" said the stranger; "awkward, too. A strange town this of yours, where there is only one jeweller's shop,

and even there one cannot get served. At least, I have only been able to discover one—know you of another, fair damsel ?”

“No, sir ; there is no other in the town. It is not often we are troubled with many grand folks, who are overburdened with old jewellery to be repaired, or with money to purchase new. But, sir, as you are so anxious about the ring, perhaps——”

The young girl here hesitated diffidently.

“Well, young lady, perhaps what ?” said the cavalier, smilingly regarding her confusion.

“Well, sir, perhaps I might repair it myself. I often assist my father in his work. Indeed, lately——”

Again she checked herself ; for she was about to say that lately she had a far greater share in the week’s earnings than her father.

“Well, young lady, hesitating again ? So fair and so bashful ; fie on you ! Speak out.”

“No, sir, it matters not. I merely wished to say that I had sufficient skill to repair the ring myself, if you please to entrust it to me.”

“A thousand thanks, sweet damsel of the blue eyes. I promise you that you shall be well repaid for it ; for, rather than quarrel about the price, I will gladly throw a kiss in.”

Julia coloured to the temples, and replied proudly—

“I thank you, sir, but I am not what you take me for. I want not your kisses, nor the offer of them, for all your silk doublet, velvet, and plumed hat. I am an honest tradesman’s daughter, and I pray you to treat me as such, nor bandy your soft speeches and courtly flattery with me. If it please you to leave the ring, I will do my best—if not, I wish you a good eve.”

So saying, Julia bowed, with a grace which would have become many a court beauty.

"By the rood!" said the stranger, in nowise annoyed, but apparently rather amused, "fair damsel, you are as fiery as you are handsome. Know that there is many a noble lady at Her Majesty's Court who would not reject so absolutely the homage of even my humble self."

Then, still smiling playfully, he bowed low, with mock humility, and handed Julia the ring.

"Here it is, young lady—take it, and repair it as best you can; and as for the cost, as you repudiate my offer in part payment, you shall yourself name the price. I will call for it to-morrow afternoon, if you will please get it finished."

With these words he slightly raised his plumed hat, and left the shop. Julia remained gazing at the ring he had placed in her hand; nevertheless she bestowed a glance on the dashing stranger as he passed before the window.

"I wonder who he can be, a stranger here? Doubtless, by his bold manner and distinguished appearance, one of those gay young courtiers whom I have read of. I wonder are they all as saucy, as gallant, and as well-favoured?"

Then she again turned her attention to the ring. It was of solid gold, and of elaborate workmanship; it was set with four rubies, and an emerald in the centre. On examining the inside, she perceived that there was there an inscription in very small characters. The nature of these characters she could not discover, as they were so exceedingly minute. But there were two larger letters, engraved in a different style. These were plain enough—"E. R.," surmounted by a crown.

"E. R.," thought Julia, in astonishment ; "and surmounted by a crown ! Why, that means ELIZABETH REGINA ! Surely, then, this ring cannot be the Queen's ! Perhaps it was stolen from her ; and yet that gentleman, with all his impudent manner, seemed hardly like a thief. No matter—it is nought to me ; I have but to repair it."

Then Julia set to work at her task, and in an hour's time had nearly completed it, when she suddenly remembered her father.

An expression of deep uneasiness came across her beautiful face.

"My father !" she muttered to herself ; "I must go seek him. He has been gone for these four hours, and he has all the other gentleman's fifty sovereigns, to buy gold for his chain. Oh, heavens ! if he were to give way to that terrible craving for drink, and lose, or perhaps spend it !"

And with gloomy and terrible visions of misery and prison floating before her eyes, Julia Ransom hastened to her chamber to array herself, to go forth in search of her father.

In five minutes she was ready, and sallied out on her errand. It was now long past sundown, and the last faint lingering of twilight had disappeared. Julia hurried along toward a tavern on the East Cliff, where alas ! she had often before found her father. Arrived there, she entered timidly, and inquired of the landlady if he had been there. The woman replied, somewhat surlily, that he had ; but that she supposed he had come into a fortune, for that he had drunk only one bottle of gin, the quality of which he found fault with, and had then left, with some half-drunken sailors who had spent all their money, to go to the "King Hal" tavern in the town.

THE GOLD AND EMERALD RING.

In reply to Julia's questioning, the woman stated that he had paid for the gin with a gold piece, of which he seemed to have a pocketful ; and that he left to play a match at quoits with one of the sailors.

"And I'll warrant me he'll lose all his money ere they've done with him ; for they're a bad lot, and I don't care if I never see them in my house again."

Great was the young girl's dismay at the news. Her father, then, had broken into the money entrusted to him, and was gone off, perhaps to gamble with the remainder. In great tribulation she hurriedly left, and bent her steps in the direction of the "King Hal."

This tavern or hostelry boasted of the best accommodation of any in the town. Here all strangers put up, and here, also, the officers of the garrison at Dover and Walmer sometimes visited. For Ramsgate, even in those days, was well frequented at times, on account of its convenient harbour, and beautiful cliffs and beach.

The "King Hal" was a large house, with good stabling accommodation, and with a bowling-green and quoit-ground at the back.

Arrived at the tavern, Julia entered timidly, and inquired for her father.

But this was not his usual tavern, and they either did not know the old jeweller by sight, or perhaps—which is quite as likely—they guessed the daughter's errand, and, knowing that he had plenty of money, did not wish to lose him till he had transferred more of it from his pocket to the till. Julia, however, had heard that her father had come hither with the intention of playing a match at quoits. Accordingly, she asked and received a somewhat ungracious permission to go round into the quoit-ground to sea.

In order to do so, she was obliged to pass again out of the house to the entrance to the ground which was a few yards on one side.

Having made her way in, she looked timidly and anxiously for her father.

The ground consisted of a large green, surrounded by little arbours, each containing a bench and a seat.

On the green were the players and their friends and backers, while all around in the little arbours sat groups of men and women drinking, shouting, and singing.

It was evident that the liquor was flowing pretty freely, for at each table there was either a great tankard of ale or a bottle of spirits.

It had long been dark, but the players had obviated this by suspending lanterns near the place where the quoits were to be thrown. Altogether it was a strange scene, and one in which a young and beautiful girl might well shrink and shudder.

Julia searched in vain among the players for her father. There remained but the small arbours around the green. Julia noticed that there were present a great many men in the uniform of the Queen's arquebusiers, some of whom were at Dover and Walmer. There was also a sprinkling of sailors from merchant-ships and the war frigate then at Ramsgate. The rest of the company was composed of inhabitants or strangers.

Liquor seemed to flow in profusion. More lanterns were brought, and the place assumed the aspect of a *fête*. Soon a blind musician struck up a tune, and a country dance was started on a part of the green unoccupied by the players. Songs, music, revelry, and noise became the order of the evening.

Julia noticed with surprise the constant supplies of

fresh liquor brought in, for which no one seemed to pay. At last, in her wanderings, she discovered a neighbour, and asked him if he had seen her father.

"Yes, Miss Julia, he was here half an hour ago, and lost a game at quoits with a soldier. I don't know where he is now, but he'll be back ere long, doubtless, for he has made a match to play the serjeant of the Queen's arquebusiers for a pound a side, and I fear me much he will lose his money, Miss Julia. It's a sad thing for a neighbour to say to a daughter of her father, but John Ransom is too drunk to play a child. A wilful man will have his way ; I tried what I could to dissuade him."

"Alas !" said Julia, almost weeping, "and he has so much money with him too. Oh, I wish I could but find him !"

"I saw him last with one of the arquebusiers ; he had his arm round his neck, and staggered off, singing."

Julia coloured with shame ; and, glad to say something, asked—

"What are the Queen's arquebusiers doing here?"

"Oh, they are not all here ; it is only a guard of honour who accompany the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports."

"The Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports ! This, then, is the reason for this unwonted scene of revelry and drunkenness. I beg you, good neighbour, if you see my father, bring him to me—'twill be, indeed, a kind and neighbourly action."

"I will, Miss Julia : meanwhile you remain here, and do not venture among those roysterers."

Scarcely was Julia alone than she was accosted by a stranger.

"How now, my pretty blue-bell ? What ! all alone ? Couldn't get a sweetheart, and come to look for one, I'll

be bound. Eh, my fair damsel? Come, let us trip a dance. I've had my share of sack to-night, but i' faith I'm not drunk yet."

Julia recoiled in terror from the speaker, for she perceived at once that he was drunk.

He was in the uniform of the arquebusiers, and by the gold lace and sword he wore she surmised he was an officer of some grade. He was a young man, not ill-looking, but with a dogged, brutal expression, which spoiled otherwise good features.

"Come, my pretty cuckoo," he said, endeavouring to place his arm round her waist.

But Julia darted away.

He followed her.

"What! so coy—come, come! I'm none of your men-at-arms—no common soldier! I'm a Lieutenant of the Queen's arquebusiers—shall be Captain soon. Eh! what do you think of that, my pretty bird? Come, now, be reasonable. You won't get a Lieutenant every day."

Then the Lieutenant made another attempt, but failed to reach Julia, who again eluded his grasp.

"Curse it!" muttered the gallant Lieutenant, "this won't do—I can't be tricked by a hussy like that. Here, you fellows," he cried to two of the soldiers who were strolling about, "come here, with me."

The men obeyed.

Both, like their officer, were half drunk.

"I want to catch that saucy jade you see over there; she's playing at hide-and-seek with me. But by St. George I'll have a kiss, or I'm not an officer in her Majesty's arquebusiers."

Then, followed by the two soldiers, who seemed to enjoy

the frolic, the Lieutenant made for the young girl, whom he espied at some distance off.

As soon as she perceived him she endeavoured to escape ; but she was now almost in a corner, and her tormentors were three instead of one. On they came, the Lieutenant extending his arms to prevent her escape, the two soldiers also intercepting her each time she attempted to dart away.

At last, when almost in a corner, poor Julia, with tears of anger and shame streaming down her beautiful face, ran rapidly past one of the soldiers, eluding the hand he extended to grasp her, and hurried at all speed towards the gate by which she had entered.

Had this been clear she would have passed out and escaped ; but unfortunately for her, several soldiers were coming in.

These, seeing the young girl pursued by their Lieutenant and two of their comrades, closed the way for her escape.

“ Pray let me pass ! ” she cried wildly, panting with terror and exertion. “ Indeed, I have done no wrong.”

“ Not so fast, my pretty maid ; girls are scarce, and it is quite right that brave soldiers should have the first choice.”

At this moment, and while Julia was struggling wildly to pass through the gate, the Lieutenant and the two other soldiers came up.

“ Ha ! ha ! my pretty bird, caged at last, eh ? ” cried the former, exultingly ; “ now for the reward of valour. ‘ Faint heart never won fair lady ’—here goes.”

So saying, and despite the poor girl’s struggles, he caught her in his arms, and strove to kiss her lips.

“ Unhand me, sir ! ” she panted, struggling desperately ; “ this is cowardly and unmanly.”

Then she screamed with what little breath she had left.

Between her struggles to free herself, and the Lieutenant's to gain his point, her hood was torn off, and also part of the dress covering her neck and bosom.

"Help! help!" she cried, burning with rage and shame at her exposed state. "Is there not a gentleman or a man present?"

Then she screamed with all her force.

CHAPTER VII.

JULIA FINDS A CHAMPION.

It was not a very loud scream, but it brought her a deliverer. A figure dashed rapidly through the gate, and, after gazing for a moment at the unequal struggle going on—a strong man against a weak girl—he drew his sword, and brought it down crash on the bare head of the Lieutenant, whose cap had fallen off in the struggle.

Fortunately for the latter, the new-comer only used the flat of his weapon, or it would have fared ill with the officer of the Queen's arquebusiers.

Instantly on feeling the blow (which, by the way, was no light one), the Lieutenant loosened his hold on his victim, and half-drawing his sword, turned furiously to discover his assailant. Instantly the other struck him a crushing blow with the hilt of his sword in the face.

The Lieutenant staggered back, the blood gushing from his mouth and nose.

He shouted forth a furious oath, and recovering himself, drew his sword, and rushed towards Julia's champion.

"How now, sir! what means this?" said the latter, in an authoritative voice.

But the Lieutenant, blind with **fury**, rushed forward to attack him.

The stranger drew his sword, but ere the Lieutenant could reach him, several of the soldiers ran in between.

"The Lord Warden!" shouted one.

"My Lord of Essex!" cried another.

"The gallant Earl Essex!" cried a third.

"Release him!" said the Earl, sternly, for it was **he** ;
"I will deal with him."

The soldiers stood on one side.

"Put up your sword, sirrah!"

The Lieutenant, still half-mad with wine and rage, glared on him, and did not obey.

"Sergeant of the guard!" shouted the Earl.

The Sergeant approached, and doffed his cap, deferentially.

"Arrest that man! take his sword away, and keep strict guard over him!"

The Sergeant, ordering some soldiers to assist him, proceeded to arrest the Lieutenant. In a few seconds the latter was overpowered, and his sword taken from him.

"I hold you responsible for his safe keeping," said the Earl, turning away; "and provide a halter as soon as possible, *for I shall hang him at sunrise!*"

A shudder went through the crowd at **this** terrible threat—a threat which those who best knew the Earl felt sure he would keep.

Lord Essex seldom either threatened or promised; but when he did either, he kept his word.

The Sergeant and soldiers proceed to drag their prisoner away, in obedience to an impatient gesture from the Earl. Julia, still palpitating from the terror caused by the man's violence, hastens to rearrange her dress.

LORD Essex, having given the orders as to the disposal of the drunken Lieutenant, now turns his attention to the young girl whom he had so opportunely protected. By the dim light of the lanterns he did not at first recognize Julia ; but some men bearing links hastened up, and by their bright glare he perceived that the fair girl before him was no other than the jeweller's daughter.

"My fair damsel," said the Queen's favourite, kindly, and gallantly taking her hand, "I fear yon ruffian has sadly discomposed you, both in mind and also in person, for I perceive that your dress is torn. I will order one of my gentlemen to conduct you to my private rooms ; then, with the aid of the hostess, pins, needles, and bodkins, you can arrange your ruffled plumage. As I live, too, you are pale as death, and tremble ! Doubtless, a cup of hot wine will not be amiss. Meanwhile, I have some orders to give for the morrow, which I will now attend to. Then, when you have somewhat recovered from your fright, I will wait on you, and learn from your fair lips how this ruffianly attack on yourself commenced."

Julia was only too glad to accept the Earl's offer ; for, although by no means weak-minded, the outrage and insult to which she had been subjected brought her to the verge of a faint.

Accordingly, following one of the Earl's household, who deferentially offered to conduct her, she passed into the house, and was shown into the principal room of the hostelry, which had been appropriated for the distinguished visitor.

With the assistance of a serving-maid, Julia soon rearranged her dress, and was enabled to collect her scattered faculties by the time Lord Essex appeared.

"And now, young lady," said the latter, after first

inquiring as to whether she had received any injury, "tell me how this happened?"

"I was searching for my father, sir, when the tipsy officer accosted me. He was unable to catch me alone, so he called for the assistance of two others."

"Your father!—is he, then, here? One would have thought he would, ere this, have appeared, if in the place, for all must have heard the noise."

"Alas, sir! I fear that my father has taken too much wine. It was for that reason that I came to search for him, as he has a sum of money with him entrusted by a customer."

At this moment the Sergeant entered, and informing the Earl that his prisoner was in safe custody, asked for instructions as to the command of the soldiers; for the disgraced Lieutenant was the only officer bearing a commission.

The Earl thought for a moment, and then replied—

"You, Sergeant, will provisionally take the command of the soldiers. As to the Lieutenant, you have my orders."

The Sergeant touched his neck significantly.

The Earl nodded his head in assent, and the man was leaving the room, when Julia, who had noticed the dumb-show, cried—

"Oh, my lord, surely you are not going to have the man executed! He was rude and ruffianly, but his crime was not worthy of so terrible a punishment. Spare him, my lord; let him not meet his death for me. I can freely forgive him."

Lord Essex looked black.

"You ask me to pardon him, and say that his crime is not worthy of death; do you not know, young lady, that,

putting on one side the outrage and insult to yourself. his life is forfeited for another offence ? ”

“ For another offence ? ”

“ Yes ; for did he not draw his sword on me, and attempt to attack me ? How say you, Sergeant ? By the usages of war is not his life forfeit ? ”

“ Assuredly, my lord.”

“ You hear what the Sergeant says, fair damsel ? ”

“ Ah, sir,” said Julia, with clasped hands, “ but you will forgive him ! You are great and noble, and will not doom to death a poor wretch for a fault committed under the influence of drink. Spare him, my lord, and let me not have his blood on my head ; for assuredly I shall ever blame myself if he is executed.”

Julia looked so beseechingly, and withal so bewitching, as she imploringly said these words, that the Earl smiled, and said—

“ And has the drunken Lieutenant found a champion in her whom he intended for his prey ? Good—I will take your request into consideration ; for although the man has, by the laws of the land and of war, forfeited his life, I like not to refuse a request so prettily worded by such pretty lips.”

“ Ah, sir, then you will spare him ! ” cried Julia, joyfully.

“ Gently, my pretty bird—not so fast. In the first place, I only said I would take your request into consideration, and then only on one condition.”

“ A condition ? Oh, name it, sir. Anything that is in my power I will gladly do, rather than that this man should die.”

“ Good,” said the Earl, smiling mischievously. “ Sergeant, retire into the corridor, and wait till I summon

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRICE OF A LIFE.

THE man obeyed, and Lord Essex, taking Julia's hand, said, bending down his head till the plume in his hat touched her cheek—

“And now for the condition.”

“Name it, sir.”

Lord Essex fixed his brilliant dark eyes on the fair face before him, and said, in a low voice—

“A kiss from your sweet lips, my charming Julia.”

“My lord,” said Julia, crimsoning, “but now you rescued me from this Lieutenant, for wishing to obtain the same. Surely, my lord, you would not act as he did.”

“My fair damsel, there is a great difference; he endeavoured to snatch by force that which I only humbly solicit. Surely, I have earned some reward.”

Julia cast down her eyes, and strove to withdraw her hand, not, however, rudely, or in a manner which bespoke her greatly displeased.

Woman is woman all the world over. Julia was young, and had hitherto never heard the soft speeches and flatteries of courtiers. Francis Drake's bold, frank manner of love making was very different from the soft, insinuating manner of the Lord Warden.

“Ah, my lord!” she murmured, “do not ask me. I should be sorry for the man to be hung for my sake; but, my lord, you ask what I cannot grant. You are a great noble, and I but a poor girl——”

“Nevertheless, the handsomest in all Kent: that will I boldly maintain!”

So saying, the Earl placed his arm suddenly round her waist—not by any means roughly, but with an ease and grace peculiar to himself.

“Come, fair lady—the price of the man’s forfeit life!—will you not give it?”

And again he bent down his plumed head to hers.

As we have said, Julia was but a woman—the Earl was young, handsome, and his manner had nothing offensive, but, with all its warmth, was still respectful. Then she thought of the doomed Lieutenant, and then, too, looking up for a moment, she met the dark, flashing eyes of the Earl fixed on her.

“Come,” whispered the latter, “the price!”

Julia murmured something in deprecation, but, at the same time, turned her face upwards and towards him, in a manner which said unmistakeably, “Take it, if you choose.”

At any rate, Lord Essex so read it, for he pressed his lips to hers, and imprinted a warm kiss thereon.

Then Julia, freeing herself, and covered with blushes, said—

“Now, my lord, keep your word.”

“Without there, Serjeant of the guard!”

The Serjeant entered, and stood before him.

“Bring up your prisoner here, under guard.”

As the Serjeant left to carry this order into execution, Lord Essex turned to Julia, who still remained standing in confusion at some little distance.

“Before pardoning the fellow, I must make him go down on his knees before you and beg for your forgiveness.”

The prisoner was now brought into the room by the Serjeant and a file of soldiers.

His hands were bound, and his sword had been taken away.

Although now somewhat sobered, he still wore a dogged, vindictive look.

Lord Essex motioned for him to be brought before him.

"Well, sirrah, what have you to say in palliation of your daring mutiny?"

No answer.

"By the rood, rascal, if you dare to treat me thus contemptuously, I'll have you hanged to yon tree outside the window in five minutes. Answer me, sir! Your name?"

"John Desmond, a lieutenant in the Queen's Arquebusiers."

"And what have you to say to the outrage you attempted on this young lady, and daring to draw your sword on myself?"

"As for what you are pleased to term the outrage, my Lord Essex, I merely tried to snatch a kiss. If that be an outrage worthy of death, you, my lord, should have died long ago, if report doth not lie. As to my daring to draw a sword on you, it was dark, and I recognized you not. I knew that somewhat struck me, and turned to revenge myself without inquiring who or what it was—and so should I do again."

"Humph!" said the Earl, "your words are insolent. we will see if we cannot humble you."

Then, turning to the Sergeant, Lord Essex said,—

"Take a strong and good hempen rope, and throw the end over that pear-tree by the window. Let there be a noose in one end, and have half a dozen soldiers at the other. We will see if this fellow can meet death as insolently as he beards me."

The Sergeant proceeded to carry this order into execution ; meanwhile the Earl hummed a tune carelessly tapping his foot with his sword scabbard.

"Oh, sir !" cried Julia, "what are you going to do ?"

"What am I going to do, my pretty one ? Why, I am about to give an order. Then those soldiers you see there will drag this gentleman forth, and will place the noose of the rope around his neck—then other soldiers will haul on the end, and you will have the pleasure of seeing his pretty body swinging in the air to the bough of that pear-tree !"

"Oh ! great heavens !" cried Julia, "spare him ! Did you not promise me ?" and she looked imploringly and reproachfully in his face.

"The fellow's insolence deserves no mercy. Meanwhile, as I have received a payment from you, I am quite willing to return it in kind."

"Oh, sir, how can you jest on such a subject ?"

At this moment the Sergeant re-entered, and reported all ready.

John Desmond, the lieutenant, turned ghastly pale ; he had not before realized the terrible danger of his position. He knew but little of the Lord Warden, and did not believe before that he meant to carry his threat into execution. Now, however, the stern, grave faces of the soldiers waiting to conduct him to his death, and the dreadful preparations, convinced him of the imminence of his danger.

His knees knocked under him, and the perspiration streamed down his livid face.

The Earl fixed his eye sternly on him.

"Now, sirrah ! art inclined to repeat thy insolence, and to tell me again that thou didst no more than I do, or rumour belied me ?"

"My lord!" gasped the poor wretch, in an agony of terror; for, at a signal, the soldiers approached, and prepared to drag him forth to his death. "My lord, spare me! I knew not what I said, I was drunk with wine; spare my life, and I will offend no more!"

At a sign from the Earl, the soldiers freed him.

"Approach this lady!" said Lord Essex, indicating Julia.

"Now go down on your knees and humbly ask for her pardon!"

The Lieutenant at once fell on his knees, and did as he was bid.

"Now ask pardon of me in the same manner, and beg your miserable life as a boon from my clemency!"

This done, the Earl said to the Sergeant—

"Release him!" Then turning to the Lieutenant—

"You have to thank this lady, whom you insulted, for your life; had she not have interceded, you should have hung in the morning. As it is, I remove you from your command. You will consider yourself under arrest, and will await my pleasure. Beware how you again cross my path!"

John Desmond hurried from the room.

As he descended the stairs, he muttered, in a voice of deep hatred—

"And beware, Lord Earl, how you cross mine! I am not the man to forget an injury! The day will yet come when you and your leman there shall curse the day when you brought John Desmond to his knees to beg for his life!"

Had the Earl heard these words, it is certain that the rope and pear-tree would have been put in requisition.

As the disgraced Lieutenant hurried from the house, he

produced from the pocket of his doublet some small, glittering object, which he carefully regarded.

"Yes, yes!" he muttered, "'tis all right; this little bauble will yet work me my revenge!"

And still muttering to himself, he walked out into the darkness, glad to hide his disgraced head from the soldiers whom he had commanded.

Julia now requested permission to return home, and took her leave of the Earl, he promising to call on the morrow at her father's shop respecting the gold and emerald ring.

This, in her search for her father, Julia had carried with her. Judge, then, of her horror and dismay when, on arriving home, she discovered that she had lost it. She had placed it in her bosom for safety; and in the struggle, when her dress was torn, she had lost it.

At the first dawn of day she arose, and hastened to the "King Hal" to search for it. Alas! all in vain. It was nowhere to be found, and she returned home with the tears coursing down her fair cheeks.

To add to her wretchedness, she found that her father had spent, lost, or gambled more than half of the money entrusted to him by Sir Edward Dudley.

"What should she, what could she say, when the Earl called for his ring, and the Baronet for his gold chain?"

If, however, the grief and terror of Julia at her loss was great, it could not exceed the dismay of Lord Essex when, on calling, she informed him, weeping, that it was lost.

He said but little, not wishing to increase her sorrow at an incident for which he felt she was not blameable. He was obliged to return to London on the next day, he

said, and begged her to use every endeavour to recover the lost gem. He authorized her to offer heavy rewards to any who should restore it, and proposed to leave the money for the purpose.

But Julia shudderingly refused to receive the gold he proffered ; and, when pressed for a reason, she confessed that she feared her father might obtain possession of it. She was thus obliged to relate how he had spent a part of the money entrusted by Sir Edward Dudley for his chain.

This was a painful avowal, and one wrung from her only after much pressing and many tears.

Visions of prison, and all sorts of terrible penalties for her father's dishonesty, arose before her.

Pitying her sorrow, admiring her great beauty, and perhaps with a tenderer feeling, Lord Essex insisted on her accepting, if only as a loan, a sufficient sum to make up the amount Sir Edward had entrusted.

Half-joyfully, half-reluctantly, Julia was prevailed upon to do so ; nor is it wonderful that she should regard her new-found friend and protector as the best and most noble of mankind.

Kindness, sympathy, and generosity have always a great effect on the female mind ; and when Lord Essex bade her adieu, she followed his retreating form with her eyes till lost in the distance.

He had promised to return in the course of a month, and Julia looked forward with eager anxiety to the time, hoping that she would be enabled to discover and return him the ring. At least, she persuaded herself that that was the reason why, as day by day passed on, she looked and longed for the time, forgetting that hitherto she had not succeeded in finding the lost gem.

But such is woman. If, with regard to their feelings, they sometimes deceive others, they nearly always deceive themselves.

CHAPTER IX

THE "ENTERPRISE," AND HER CREW.

IN less than a month from the date of our last chapter, all the inhabitants of Ramsgate are assembled on the pier to witness the departure of a vessel on a long voyage. All eyes are turned towards her as she sails along up the harbour on her course to the open sea. She is a brig of about 150 tons, or thereabouts; her sails and rigging are all in order; her appointments complete in every respect; while the brass muzzles of four carronades protruding from each side proclaim that her crew are determined she shall not fall an unresisting prey to the first pirate she may meet. In addition to the eight carronades, there is also a long gun amidships. This is now covered over by the long-boat, its black muzzle being alone visible; and around the mainmast are ranged firelocks, cutlasses, and pistols.

Now, in her passage up the harbour she comes quite close to the pier-head, where most of the inhabitants are assembled to witness the novel sight of an armed ship sailing with a cargo for the Spanish Main. On her high poop are assembled a group of men; one of these is leaning over the bulwarks, gazing out on the distant horizon. It is no other than our friend, Captain Francis Drake. Near him are his two brothers, Will and Michael, and on his left hand Sir Edward Dudley. The form of a young

girl may also be perceived : it is that of Amy Drake, who begged so hard and wept so bitterly at the thought of being separated from her brother Francis, that at last she was allowed to make one of the adventurous voyagers. Her young brother Harry, although only fifteen, also accompanies them ; thus leaving Mrs. Drake only her two daughters, Louisa and Mary.

The little vessel bounds along before the favouring breeze, and is now abreast of the pier-head. A cheer bursts forth from the assembled crowd, as the brig with her adventurous crew pass close to the pier-head. Kerchiefs are waved and hands are kissed, while many a prayer goes up to Heaven from some one or another of the spectators, for the safety of a brother, father, husband or lover on board the *Enterprise*—for such is the name of the brig.

And now she is out of the harbour, and fairly at sea. The white sails belly forth as she catches the freshening breeze ; the cheery songs of the sailors, as the anchors are secured and every stitch of canvas set to the gale, fade away by degrees, as, careering over to the wind, the *Enterprise* dashes through the foaming waves, leaving the white cliffs of old England behind her.

The lately crowded pier is all but deserted. The *Enterprise* has been gone some two hours, and yet two female figures still remain gazing sadly out on the horizon. A small white speck may still be seen. On this the eyes of the two women are rivetted.

"May Heaven guard and protect them on their perilous enterprise !" said the one, the elder ; and with clasped hands and tearful eyes she still gazed on the fading vessel. This was Mistress Drake.

"May Heaven bless and protect him, and grant that t

may love me ever !” murmured the younger female, with a sigh.

It was Julia Ransom.

And now the white speck is gone from their gaze.

The *Enterprise* was a brig of some 150 or 200 tons, nearly new, and well equipped in every respect.

The vessel and cargo had been purchased by Francis Drake with the two thousand pounds which Sir Edward had so liberally advanced for the purpose. Indeed, the young captain had so imbued his patron with his own enthusiasm, that he resolved himself to accompany the expedition, and share its dangers and glories, its profit and loss.

The brig was unusually well-manned, and was well provided with arms and ammunition.

This, as well as the large complement of men for so small a vessel, was due to Sir Edward Dudley, who anticipated more of difficulty and danger than did Francis Drake.

The crew consisted of thirty-five men and boys. Then there were the brothers Drake—Francis, Will, Michael, and Harry—and Sir Edward and his servant Gideon, making in all forty-one.

Amy Drake was the only female on board ; and it was only after great solicitation and entreaty that the brothers would consent to her accompanying them ; for they said with truth, that they might have to encounter dangers, and go through scenes, for which a young girl was quite unfitted.

However, after a long resistance, they gave in, and Amy was allowed to come. This result was due in a measure to Sir Edward Dudley, whom Amy had by some means or another brought over to her side.

And so it happened that the gentle girl formed one on board the *Enterprise*, which is now merrily dashing through the foaming waters of the Atlantic.

In the year 1565—that is to say, exactly sixty-five years after the date when the first European planted his foot in the New World—South America was, almost without exception, under Spanish sway.

So far, this was right ; for to Spain belonged the honour of having first sent her navigators and discoverers into those distant latitudes. There was Pedro Alvares Cabrado, who, in the year 1500, discovered Brazil and the mouth of the mighty Amazon river ; Perez de la Rua, who in 1515 discovered Peru ; Juan de Solis, who explored Rio de Janeiro and Rio de la Plata in the years 1515 to 1518. Then there was Ferdinand Magellan (not a Spaniard, certainly, but a Portuguese in the Spanish service), who in 1510 discovered Patagonia ; and, lastly, Diego de Almagro, who sixteen years later discovered Chili.

Let us now see how Spain, mistress of the New World, used her conquest.

The historian Robertson, in our opinion, sets that matter at rest in the following lines :—

“ The first result of the Spanish conquest and colonisation of South America was an astonishing diminution among the original inhabitants.”

A diminution of the inhabitants ! Behold a civilized nation, which says in effect to another not enjoying the same blessing—“ Submit to us, and acknowledge us your conquerors.” And to obtain that submission which they demand, the Spaniards, instead of having recourse to pacific and generous measures, commence to pillage, ravish, and slay.

In Mexico, in Peru, where they encountered resistance,

half the inhabitants perished by the sword. It was the same in the neighbourhood of Carthagena, of Panama, of Venezuela, and of Buenos Ayres, as also in New Granada.

Robertson, the historian, says—"As the Indians of that country were less savage and untutored than any of the other South Americans, they defended themselves with great resolution and skill. But the bravery and determination of the Spanish commanders, Benalceyar and Quesada, overcame all obstacles and all dangers, and added that conquest to the others Spain had achieved in South America."

Overcame all obstacles and all dangers! We should like to know what serious obstacles or dangers soldiers cased in armour, and armed with "thunderers" (for so the Indians named the arquebuses and cannon) could find in meeting and destroying half-naked unfortunates, armed only with bows, arrows, and clubs?

But we will dwell no more on the subject.

The excuse of the Spaniards—if there could be any—for the manner of using their conquest was this:—They were greedy for gold. The thirst for gold, more furious a thousand times than that for wine, made their men reckless and cruel. Behold the results—as the Spaniards, in their lust for gold, did not hesitate to deluge the soil with blood, so the future, the avenger of the oppressed, had in store a terrible chastisement for the descendants of the ruthless conquerors. Of what rank, of what importance now is Spain in South America?

The Spaniards sowed, but others have reaped.

What we wish to be understood in this hasty sketch of the Spanish policy in South America is, that at the time when Francis Drake made his first voyage, they tyrannized

more than ever over the unfortunate inhabitants, and were, as a consequence, more than ever hated and feared.

The brig sailed on the 3rd of June from Ramsgate, and arrived on the fifteenth at the island of Madeira. This first part of the voyage was performed under the most favourable circumstances. Fair weather, smooth seas, and moderate, favouring gales, made the voyage to Madeira almost a pleasure trip.

The crew were composed of young, strong men, and they were good seamen. The brig herself turned out to be all her young captain expected, both in seaworthiness and sailing qualities; her masts were well-proportioned, her sails well-cut and taut; when we add to this that she was just sufficiently ballasted with cargo, and that the wind blew a gentle breeze from the east-south-east during the whole time, it may easily be imagined that the passage was fair and pleasant enough.

Francis Drake had good reason to be satisfied with this favourable commencement of their voyage. The days passed with him like hours, the hours like minutes. The first feeling of sorrow at parting with his mother and sisters had worn off, and, with his brothers, Amy, and his friend and patron Sir Edward, he was happy as the day is long.

Sir Edward Dudley himself did not seem the same man as he who had resided for nearly a month with the Drake family at Ramsgate. There one might often see him sad, gloomy, and depressed; now, since the ship had left behind her the shores of England, he was all life and spirits.

In putting into Madeira, Francis Drake had more than one object in view. It was not only to procure fresh provisions and water, but also to give his guest Sir Edward,

and his sister, some relaxation from the monotony of the voyage.

On anchoring in the harbour of Madeira, Francis, his brothers William and Henry, Amy, and Sir Edward, went on shore in the boat ; and whilst the three first went off towards the town to purchase the necessary provisions, Sir Edward and Amy strolled off into the interior of the beautiful island.

CHAPTER X.

THE ORANGE GROVE.

SOME people might be surprised at a brother leaving a sister—young, amiable, and beautiful—alone with a stranger ; but, in the first place, they did not consider Sir Edward in the light of a stranger ; and in the second, he had given them so many and such great proofs of his genuine regard, that they put perfect faith in his honour.

It is true that, when he found himself for the first time alone with the charming little Amy, he experienced a feeling which he could scarcely account for. It is strange how altered circumstances change our manner of seeing, thinking, and acting. At Ramsgate Sir Edward took no notice of Amy, beyond occasionally addressing to her, as to her sisters, a few words of commonplace politeness ; but now, especially during the last few days, the manner of the young girl towards him was kind, friendly, almost affectionate. He endeavoured to account for it on the ground of her gratitude ; for was it not to his influence that she owed the permission to accompany her favourite brother Francis ? What, then, more natural than that an affec-

tionate sister should feel grateful, and show her gratitude to the man who had prevented a separation she dreaded? Nevertheless, regarding the young girl for the first time attentively, he felt troubled. For the first time he noticed that she was very beautiful; for the first time he saw in all their beauty the soft pure contour of her features, the grace and elegance of her figure, and the charm of her *naïve*, innocent manner.

Amy had followed with her eyes the retreating figures of her brothers as they walked on to the town, till they were lost to her sight. Suddenly she turned, and addressing her companion, said, blushing—

“A thousand pardons, sir; I really forgot you were waiting for me. But are you quite sure that Francis and my brothers are quite *safe*—that they are in no danger in this strange country?”

“And what do you imagine is going to happen to them, Amy? This island belongs to Portugal, and Portugal is not at war with England. The best proof that there is no danger to be apprehended is the fact that your brother Francis was the first to propose that you should accompany us on shore.”

“You are right, sir; I am very silly,” said Amy, smiling. “You won’t tell Francis of my folly, will you? He will laugh at me. Come, let us make the best of our time. How beautiful the country looks, does it not, sir? Oh, I am certain Francis would be angry if you told him I was afraid; for the other day he scolded me because I said it would be very dangerous to trade with those savage Indians, who, people say, are cannibals, and eat Europeans.”

“In the meantime,” said Sir Edward, smiling, “they have not yet succeeded in eating the Spaniards; for they are their masters to the present day.”

"Ah, yes—you are right ; but the Spaniards have known them for a long time, and understand how to manage them better than the English."

"You think, then, that the savages will find our countrymen more easy, more tender eating, perhaps, than the Spaniards?"

"Ah, you are laughing at me, Sir Edward ; it is too bad of you. Well, never mind—I will let you laugh ; but promise me this—if Francis ventures among these savage people, of whom I have read such terrible accounts at home—for I assure you I read a great deal about America before we left Ramsgate—promise me that you will not leave him."

"Willingly—I will promise you to go wherever your brother goes."

"Ah, thank you. And, as I cannot remain on board the ship by myself, I shall go with you and my brothers, shall I not?"

"Ah, we will talk of that another time."

"And why not talk about it now?"

"Why, because we cannot decide without your brother, in the first place ; and because we do not know what the future may bring forth, in the second."

"Ah, you are right again, sir," said Amy, with a confiding look ; "you are always right. I am happy now, very happy ; why, then, should I torment myself about the future ? Oh, how soft and warm the air is here, is it not, sir ? And what a beautiful perfume there is ! Look there before us, too, on those little trees. Why, I declare there are oranges !"

And Amy opened her soft blue eyes in the utmost astonishment.

"Oranges! Yes, certainly they are oranges," said her companion, "and very fine ones, too."

"Oranges!" said Amy, still half incredulous; "and so near our poor old Ramsgate, where there is nothing but apples and pears, rocks and shrubs. Oh, Sir Edward! do get me some of those beautiful great oranges—only a dozen, to take on board with us."

"Oh, certainly," was the laughing reply. "In the meantime, I hope the owners won't object."

"The owners! Surely, since they have planted these trees by the roadside, they intend them for the use of all passers by."

"Such refinement of courtesy on the part of the inhabitants of Madeira seems to me extremely problematical, No matter; I imagine that a piece of silver will appease their anger, should they catch us robbing their orchard."

So saying, he conducted Amy to one of the trees loaded with the finest fruit, and, placing his foot on a low branching, commenced plucking the ripe fruit, and throwing them into Amy's lap.

"Ah, thank you—thank you! You are kind, Sir Edward," cried Amy, in delight. "Indeed I am so much obliged to you—I do like you so; indeed I should be very ungrateful if I did not. Oh, these beautiful oranges! How many have I? Let me count. Four—eight—twelve—thirteen; one more than I asked for. Come down, now, please, and we will eat the odd one ourselves. It is no more than we deserve, I am sure, after the trouble we have had in gathering them. There, that will do beautifully. Now sit down by the side of me. Now, take one; not the best though—that must be for Francis."

Seated by the side of the fair young girl, Sir Edward felt amused, pleased, and gratified: there was so much

candour, *naïveté*, and gentleness in her. Her words, "I do like you so," which she repeated more than once, were said with such complete *abandon* and innocence, that he could not but smile.

In two minutes Amy had skilfully peeled the orange, and divided it into two parts. She then presented one graciously to her companion. He shook his head.

"What! you won't take some?" said Amy, in surprise.

"No."

"And why? Do you not like oranges?"

"Yes, I like them; but——"

"But what?"

"I don't like people who do not keep their words."

"People who do not keep their words! I do not understand you."

"You have a bad memory. Did you not promise, the other day, when I persuaded your brother to allow you to accompany us, that if I succeeded you would look on me with as great affection as on him?"

"Well?" said Amy, looking surprised.

"Well, it is certain that you have not kept your word, since in the most trifling circumstances you show a preference for Francis. For instance, now, you keep the finest orange for him."

At these words of her companion, poor Amy turned first red and then white. A bright sparkle of the eye accompanied the crimson flush; a tear rolled down her cheek as she turned pale.

"There, take them—take them all," she said, with faltering voice, holding towards him the fruit, which she had gathered together in a handkerchief; "take them all, sir; and if I have annoyed or pained you, pray think no more of it."

Sir Edward made a gesture, refusing the young girl's offer, and arose to his feet.

"What am I doing?" he thought to himself. "I am about to show this young girl, to whom hitherto I have scarcely been civil, that I care for her—to ask her, in fact, whether she feels any sentiment for me other than friendship."

And even if Amy had replied, "You have no need to be jealous of Francis, for I love you not only as well, but better than him," what would the avowal avail, when he had no right to accept it? No—certainly he had no right to force, or even accept such an avowal; for it was not for him, under any circumstances, to charge himself with the love of a young girl, be she never so fair and loveable.

"Pshaw! what a fool, if not worse, I am," he thought. "Here am I about to talk to a girl whom a brother has confided to me, in other language than that of a brother."

"Come, let us return," he said, turning to Amy, who still remained seated.

Then, bursting into laughter, he cried—

"Oh, you little silly! I declare I quite frightened you with my serious manner and grave voice. You look quite sad, Amy. I was only in fun, little one. As if I should be so unreasonable as to expect you to like me as well as Francis!—as if a mere friend could be on an equality in your affections with a brother! Come—give me my half of the oranges, and let me carry the others, for they will be too heavy for you. There; now let us be getting back towards the harbour, or we shall be late."

Amy smiled, and gave him her hand to assist her to rise. Perhaps, however, the smile was not more sincere than the gay manner of Sir Edward; perhaps, could we have read the heart of the gentle Amy, the light, playful

tone he now affected was less pleasing to her than that in which he said, "I do not like people who do not keep their words."

At the appointed hour Amy and her companion were at the rendezvous, where they met Francis and his brothers.

"Well, little sister, asked the captain, "have you enjoyed your stroll into the country?"

"Oh yes, indeed, so very, very much!" was the reply; at the same moment Amy darted a glance from under her long lashes at Sir Edward, which, however, he did not, or affected not to perceive.

CHAPTER XL.

DON JOSE DE CASTANAROS.

THE next day the anchor was weighed, and the brig proceeded on her course for the Spanish main. Everything went prosperously, and as the most sanguine could have wished.

On the 30th of July they passed Trinidad, and at about six in the evening of the 5th of August they cast anchor in the bay of Santa Marta, in the kingdom of New Granada. It would be impossible to paint the enthusiasm, the joy of all on board, at this safe termination of their long and perilous voyage. Sir Edward Dudley alone, of all on board, remained buried in a fit of gloomy abstraction. In vain he tried to rouse himself; a feeling—almost a presentiment of coming evil—had taken possession of him. A gentle touch on the shoulder aroused him.

"You seem sad, sir," said Amy, in her soft, silvery tones; "do you not, then, share our joy at having at last

arrived at our destination ? See how pleased my brothers are ; even the very sailors are almost beside themselves with delight. One of them—Jackson—told me just now that he would not change with any of our great queens, lords, or councillors ; for, great as they are they will die without having seen this beautiful new land, while Jackson in his old age will be able to tell tales to his children of the marvels of the New World.”

The gay prattle of Amy by degrees dissipated Sir Edward’s melancholy.

“ And you, young lady—are you as delighted as the rest at our arrival ? ”

“ Indeed, I am more pleased than any, because it is all through the skill of my dear brother Francis. Ah, is he not a noble, brave fellow ? ”

While Amy and Sir Edward were thus conversing, Francis Drake had ordered the boat to be lowered and brought alongside.

“ You are coming with us ? ” he asked of his passenger.

“ Oh yes ! I fancy you would get on but badly without my aid.”

“ I know, sir, that we are greatly indebted to you,” replied the young Captain ; “ but are we again about to receive fresh proofs of your good-will ? Is it any special assistance you speak of ? ”

“ Yes, my young friend,” was the reply ; “ I shall this day be of greater use to you than you imagine.”

“ Pray explain, sir.”

“ Do you not know, true son of old England that you are, that the English language is not the only one spoken in the world—that there are other tongues, which you cannot comprehend ? Did it never occur to you that this

country was inhabited solely by the natives and the Spaniards, neither of whom understand English?"

"Ah, how stupid I am, to be sure!" said Francis. "I had never thought of that. And do you, sir, then, speak Spanish?"

"A little, I speak and understand Spanish as I speak and understand Italian, French, and German. I have travelled much, and have picked up a little of most languages."

"Ah, Sir Edward, you are indeed a friend!" said the young sailor, impulsively grasping the other's hand. "You are as wise and learned as you are brave and noble."

Amy said nothing, but her eyes sparkled with pleasure at these words of her brother to his friend.

"The boat is alongside, Captain," cried a sailor from the gangway.

"Good," replied Francis. "Michael," he said to his brother, "I am going on shore with Sir Edward, to arrange with the authorities for permission to land, or proceed up the river to trade with the Indians. You will remain on board in charge of the brig. One-half of the crew I will allow to land—if the Spanish authorities do not object—to-day, and the other half to-morrow."

"And what of me and Harry, brother?" asked Amy. "When may we come on shore into this beautiful country?"

"Ah, well, all in good time, Amy; we will not forget you."

So saying, Francis and Sir Edward entered the boat, and were rowed towards the land.

Apparently, Santa Marta was not a very busy place, for

with the exception of one or two groups of negroes on the quay, and a sailor or so lounging about, there was hardly anyone visible. There was one man, however, who, ever since the arrival of the *Enterprise* had never once taken his eyes off her ; he watched every movement, like a cat watching a mouse. As they approached, they observed that he was richly dressed in the Spanish mode, and wore a hat shaded by a magnificent feather.

The instant that Francis, followed by Sir Edward, leaped on shore, he advanced towards them. Taking off his plumed hat, and bowing politely, he said—

“ Gentlemen, I perceive you are strangers. I presume you come to trade, and procure from the inhabitants of this country gold in exchange for your merchandize. If you have need of any guidance or assistance, I, Don José de Castanaros, in the service of his majesty the King of Spain, place myself at your disposal.”

Having delivered this speech, Don José again bowed, more profoundly than before, and awaited their answer. As for Francis Drake, he did not understand a word, and contented himself with bowing in return. But Sir Edward, having returned Don José’s salute, replied—

“ Senor, my friend here, Captain Francis Drake, a subject of her majesty Queen Elizabeth of England, has voyaged hither, as you conjecture, to trade. He has on board his brig yonder a varied and valuable cargo, which he hopes to be able to dispose of, and return with some of the golden ingots of the New World.

At these words of Sir Edward, Don José again bowed with the greatest politeness ; but the bow was accompanied by a smile which neither Francis nor the other observed— a smile full of meaning, sinister and mocking, which, had either noticed, would have warned them to beware. Sir

Edward explained to Francis, who could not understand a word of Don José's, how the latter had volunteered to be their guide. The young Captain was delighted.

"Tell this honourable gentleman," he said, "that we accept the offer of his assistance and guidance with the utmost pleasure, and feel grateful for his kindness."

Sir Edward explained to Don José (who professed to understand no more English than Francis did Spanish) the purport of his words. Don José, smiling blandly, said—

"The preliminary proceedings, though very simple, are none the less necessary. There is at Santa Marta, as at every port on the Spanish Main, a government officer called the Syndic. He has his instructions and authority from his majesty King Philip of Spain, and is at once the comptroller of the customs and chief magistrate of the port. He has absolute power to deal as he may think best in all questions relating to foreigners. His name is Don Placido Ortigoza; he is a courteous gentleman, and I have the honour to be his friend. Let us then seek him at once, and I have no doubt that, charmed by the prompt visit of courtesy of Captain Drake, Don Placido will give him all the papers and passes necessary for his project.

Don José laid considerable stress on the words, *visit of courtesy*.

Sir Edward smiled, and explained in English the meaning of the words.

"Ah!" said Francis, also smiling, "visit of courtesy! I fancy that that in Spanish means a present of a large purse of gold to Don Placido, and a smaller one to Don José."

"Hush!" said Sir Edward, in a low voice, grasping his arm; "be careful what you say."

"And why? Don José cannot understand."

"I fancied," said Sir Edward, gravely, "that at your words he started and coloured up. At all events, let us be on our guard."

"You think, then, that he understands English? No matter. Surely, even if he does, he will not take offence at a few words spoken in jest. No, certainly not. He appears to me a most courteous and affable gentleman."

"Perhaps so; but remember, that sometimes extreme politeness is but a mask for falsehood and deep designs."

"Falsehood and deep designs, Sir Edward! you are indeed suspicious. Why should this gentleman here wish to betray or injure us?"

"Why, indeed? still I have my misgivings. I do not quite like his manner and appearance."

"His manner and appearance! Surely his manner is polite and courteous, and his appearance noble!"

Francis was right, for Don José was of tall and commanding presence. His features, bronzed by the tropical sun, were noble and impressive, and his manner had a peculiar suavity and charm. Why, then, should Sir Edward doubt his sincerity?

In the meantime, Francis had ordered the boat to return to the vessel to bring off his sister Amy and Harry. On its return, Don José gazed with surprise and admiration on the beautiful form of the young girl.

"Had we not better let your sister return on board and wait till we have transacted the necessary business with Don Placido?" said Sir Edward to Francis.

Ere the latter could reply, Don José broke in—

"By no means; do not think of sending the young lady back to the vessel. Don Placido will be proud and glad to entertain you all, I feel assured."

Then, darting a rapid glance of admiration at Amy, which called a blush to her cheek, he asked Sir Edward—

“Captain Francis Drake has come with his vessel direct from England?”

“Yes, sir, direct from England; merely calling at Madeira on the voyage.”

“And you, sir—are you his first officer?”

“No, I am merely a passenger—a friend.”

“Ah! and may I be so bold as to ask who is that young lady who accompanies you?”

“That is Captain Drake’s sister.”

“Ah! It is no wonder that, with such an angel on board, you should have made a favourable passage.”

With these words Don José bowed profoundly to the young girl, casting on her at the same time a look of admiration.

Amy, although she understood not the words, could not fail to understand the bow and the look. She cast down her eyes and blushed.

There was nothing objectionable in the words; nevertheless, Sir Edward felt a pang of annoyance. He frowned and shot an angry glance at Don José, to which the latter merely replied by an affable smile.

CHAPTER XII.

DON PLACIDO ORTIGOZA.

THE house of Don Placido Ortigoza was situated in the centre of the town, in the principal street. It was a good, substantial-looking house, and appeared quite handsome in comparison with the wretched sheds by which it was sur-

rounded. A Spanish soldier, in heavy armour, and with his musket on his shoulder, marched up and down, keeping guard over the house of the chief personage in Santa Marta.

Don José, leaving his companions for a moment, entered the hall, and asked of a slave who was in attendance for his lordship, Don Placido Ortigoza.

"His lordship sleeps, senor—he is taking his *siesta*," was the reply.

Don José nodded his head, as if to say, "No matter; he will see me."

"I will go and announce you," he said to Francis and Sir Edward. "In five minutes I will return."

So saying, he raised the matting which covered an inner door, and disappeared. The slave brought chairs, and placed them for the strangers. He was a negro from the coast of Gambia, black as ebony, with low forehead, prominent cheek-bones, coarse woolly hair, flat nose, and brutish, stupid look.

Amy regarded him with astonishment and terror. She had never before seen a negro.

"Well, little sister," said Francis, laughing, "are you frightened at this poor devil?"

"Devil, indeed," said Amy, "is the right word, for he looks scarcely human—so black and so horribly ugly!"

"Black and ugly enough, in all conscience," said Francis, "but still not quite a devil, Amy. Look at him—how stupid and woebegone he looks! It almost seems that since he has been torn away from his native land, he has forgotten how to think. Ask him, Sir Edward, from what country he comes."

Sir Edward asked him in the Spanish language.

"Where me born?" said the negro, showing his white

teeth; "me no savvey long time gone—long way off."

"It is as I told you," said Francis; "the poor fellow has forgotten even to think. And it is by such means as this that Sir John Hawkins proposed I should enrich myself. 'They are not men,' said Sir John. 'They are no longer men,' he should have said; 'for slavery has reduced them to the level of animals.'"

Gideon, who had followed his master, touched the negro's arm curiously.

"What are you doing, Gideon?" said Sir Edward, amazed.

"Master, I was wondering——"

"Well, what were you wondering?"

"I was wondering whether these people have sense and feeling like ourselves; and they have, for see how he started when I pinched his arm. Here, Snowball!" said Gideon, "here's a penny for you."

Sir Edward burst into laughter.

"You great oaf, you!" he said to his servant; "of what advantage do you think a penny is to him here, where nothing but Spanish money is ever seen?"

"No matter," said Gideon, shrugging his great shoulders; "he can wear it hung round his neck by a chain, as a medal. Some day he will meet an Englishman, who will give him value for it."

Sir Edward and Francis were amusing themselves at the grimaces Gideon was making at the black, and at the wondering manner in which the latter was turning the piece of strange money over and over in his huge hand; when the matting was again raised, and Don Placido, followed by Don José, entered the ante-room.

Don Placido was well named; he seemed the very type

of calm, placid indifference. His large round face assorted well with a round, fat body. Imagine Falstaff, after having finished sundry tankards of old sack, and you have Don Placido. The travellers all rose from their seats on the entrance of the Syndic and Don José.

"Pray be seated, gentlemen, be seated," said the former; "do not disturb yourselves for me. And you, too, *senorita*, allow me to offer you this easy-chair; it is better adapted for a lady than the one you have. Excuse me for having kept you, but, to tell the truth, I was enjoying my mid-day *siesta*."

"Accept our apologies, *senor*," said Sir Edward, "for having disturbed you; but we were not aware of the fact, or we would have postponed our visit."

"Spare your apologies, sir," said Don Placido, urbanely; "when my good friend Don José informed me that some noble English merchants had honoured me with a visit, I made all haste to attend you."

"Do not say noble English merchants—I, at least, am not noble—but honest English merchants only."

"Good, good!" said Don Placido; "I know the English, and appreciate them. They are a great people—brave, strong, and noble. Yes, sir strangers, I love the English."

Turning to Francis, he continued—

"And you, sir, I suppose, are the Captain Drake who commands the vessel which arrived to-day in our harbour? the —— I forget the name that Don José told me."

"The *Enterprise*."

Don Placido repeated the words, and asked—

"I suppose, then, that Captain Drake has brought his ship to New Granada for the purpose of trading?"

"Yes, senor."

"And of what is **the** cargo composed?"

"Of every kind of merchandize—clothing, linen, blankets, shoes, ploughs, and agricultural implements; furniture, arms——"

"Arms!" exclaimed Don Placido, with some little animation; "ah! you have arms on board?"

"Only a small quantity——"

"Good, good! Arms are always a good speculation. And you have also, I suppose, liquors—Geneva gin, hollands, brandy?"

"No, senor," said Sir Edward; "the intention of the captain was to trade principally with the native Peruvians and Indians. He thought, therefore, that it would be more laudible to supply them with useful merchandize, rather than to pander to their faults and vices."

Don José regarded the speaker with a look of astonishment and pity. After a silence of a few moments, Don Placido, whose smooth face was unruffled by any emotion, said urbanely—

"But, senor Francis Drake, you say you design to traffic with the Indians. It is true that at the present time we are at peace with them, in proof of which, you may see, this very day, some of their greatest chiefs in the town. Still, senor, has it never occurred to you that, when you shall have sold to them the arms and ammunition which you have on board, that we may be again at war with them? It would not, then, be to the interests of Spain that they should be allowed to obtain an unlimited supply of the weapons of warfare. Do you understand **my** meaning?"

Sir Edward explained to Francis Don Placido's objection.

The young captain had foreseen the objection as to the arms and ammunition, and had resolved, should any objection arise to their sale, to place them on one side for a future opportunity.

"Tell Don Placido," said Francis, "that we will not trade with the Indians for arms or ammunition without the knowledge and consent of the Spanish officers in Santa Marta."

"Good!" said Don Placido, when this was explained to him, apparently quite reassured; "good, indeed; I thought that the wise and noble English had no designs injurious to the interests of Spain, or of us who receive them as brothers."

Rising as he said these words, he placed his hand familiarly and kindly on the shoulder of Sir Edward, and said—

"Tell Captain Drake, my dear sir, that to-morrow, if he pleases, he can commence to discharge his cargo. Tell him, also, that I will place an empty warehouse at his disposal, and that as the work of unloading is long and fatiguing, that I will send to help him twenty of my negroes."

"Don Placido is only too good," said Francis, when Sir Edward explained to him what was said; "it would be uncourteous to refuse his offer, so we will accept it with many thanks."

"And now, gentlemen," said Don Placido, as if about to bid them adieu, "can I do anything else for you?"

Sir Edward bowed, and was about to speak, when Francis caught his arm, and said—

"But we have not yet spoken of the per centage—the customs' dues to be paid on landing the cargo."

"Pardon me, senor," said Sir Edward to Don Placido, "my friend, Captain Drake, has just said to me that

you can confer one more favour on us before we leave."

Don Placido smiled blandly, and said—

"Name it, senor; and if in my power, I will grant it."

"It is this, senor: Captain Drake wishes to know the amount of the customs' dues to be paid to you on landing the cargo?"

A bland smile was on Don Placido's lips as he replied—

"We will discuss that question another day," he said, in a careless, off-hand manner; "in the meanwhile, you can tell Captain Drake, for his satisfaction, that it is my custom to treat foreign travellers and merchants in the most paternal manner. Does Captain Drake consider two per cent. on the sum at which the cargo is valued an exorbitant demand?"

"Two per cent.!" cried Francis, joyfully; "tell Don Placido, Sir Edward, that so far from considering it exorbitant, I will gladly pay so moderate a demand."

"Adieu, then, till to-morrow," said Don Placido; "meanwhile, senor captain, you can rely on my assistance and paternal protection, should you require it."

"Two per cent.," muttered Francis, as they left the Syndic's house; "it is most moderate—it is nothing! And I was told in London that the Dutch and French merchants who had endeavoured to trade in the Spanish American possessions had been outrageously imposed on and robbed by the Spanish authorities. Only two per cent., Sir Edward! I had never hoped for such good luck. Why, we shall make our fortune even more rapidly than I thought."

"True," said Sir Edward, gravely; "but——"

He checked himself, for Francis seemed in such high spirits, and so delighted, that he thought he would not

damp his joy by giving expression to the misgivings and suspicions which had seized him, but which, perhaps, were, after all, groundless.

"Ah!" cried Francis, suddenly halting, "there is Don José de Castanares, and we have not thanked him for his civility. Hasten, Sir Edward, and convey to him our gratitude; it is to him we owe the introduction to Don Placido."

CHAPTER XIII.

"CAIN, WHERE IS THY BROTHER?"

DON JOSE DE CASTANARES left the Syndic's house a few moments after Sir Edward, Francis, and Amy.

Sir Edward hastened to thank him for his kindness. Almost at the first words of thanks, he interrupted—

"Senor," he said, "I should much regret that you should attach any importance to so simple a service. If you wish to show that you are obliged to me, you can best do so by permitting me to offer you some refreshments at my house."

They could not refuse the hospitality of a man who gave such proofs of his willingness to serve them. Even Sir Edward, in spite of his secret dislike to and distrust of the Spaniard, accepted, without hesitation, the offer.

The dwelling of Don José was on the left of the port, and quite in the suburbs of the town. To arrive there, it was necessary to pass through winding lanes, shaded by noble trees. On each side were indigo and cochineal plantations and fields of sugar-cane.

Amy was radiant with joy. Her beautiful eyes had ample matter to delight them. When they arrived at

the large and carefully kept garden which surrounded the Spanish captain's house, her delight knew no bounds. The American flora was to her at once novel and beautiful.

"This is merely a little country villa of mine," said Don José, as they entered this Eden; "my profession compels me to be more on the sea than on land. Nevertheless, as I usually spend two months every year on shore at Santa Marta, I contrive to make my abode as comfortable as possible. Ah!" he continued, seeing Amy's longing look at the beautiful flowers, "I see that the senorita admires my flowers. Tell her, sir, that they are at her service."

This was accompanied by a gallant bow.

"Amy," said Sir Edward, smiling, "the Captain José de Castanares imagines that you have a great desire to rob his garden of some of those beautiful flowers. He gives you full permission so to do."

"Ah!" cried Amy, joyfully, "the senor is, indeed, kind; give him my thanks. Come, Harry, come with me, and help me to gather a bouquet."

"Directly, sister—directly," said the youth."

Directly! Master Harry told a fib; for as Don José walked along the path in front with Sir Edward and Francis, Harry was busily engaged in plucking peaches, which hung in profusion from a tree at a little distance.

Every one to his taste; and to the taste of Master Harry fruits were preferable to flowers.

A sudden cry called his attention from his agreeable pursuit.

It was Amy who had given the cry.

"Amy, Amy! what is the matter?" he said, running to his sister.

Pale, trembling, the flowers she had gathered fallen from her hand and scattered on the ground, Amy stood pointing before her to the form of a hideous reptile which was running nimbly up the trunk of a tree.

It was a species of lizard, but of gigantic dimensions—six feet in length at the least. The body and tail were covered by rough scales; a row of these scales ranged along the back like spines; its head was long and pointed, like that of an alligator; its small, round, fiery eyes seemed to glare at them, while from its gaping mouth it kept darting forth a long, forked tongue, like that of a serpent. No wonder Amy was frightened, for the animal was quite hideous enough. Harry was no coward; nevertheless, when his eyes fell on the reptile, he, like his sister, gave a cry of terror.

“Come away, come away!” he cried, seizing Amy by the arm, who seemed petrified at the sight.

Harry had almost to carry her away, for she was completely paralyzed by terror.

In the meanwhile, Don José had conducted the strangers into his house. They found a cold collation prepared for them.

They were seating themselves at the table, at Don José’s request, when the latter suddenly exclaimed—

“But the *nina**—where is she?”

“Gideon,” said Sir Edward, “run and tell Miss Amy and her brother that Don José awaits them at table.”

“No matter,” said Francis, laughing; “she is happy enough among the flowers. Give her but flowers, and I’ll warrant she will care little for the grandest banquet ever set before a king.”

As she approached the house with Harry, Amy had

regained some of her composure ; but still she looked so pale and frightened when she appeared in answer to the message sent by Gideon, that all observed it.

"Why, Amy, what is the matter?" cried Sir Edward and Francis at the same time.

"We have discovered," said Harry, trying to look unconcerned, "that there are other things besides roses in the gardens of the New World."

"What do you mean? Explain yourself."

"Why, senor, Amy was gathering a bouquet, when suddenly there appeared before her a frightful beast."

"A frightful beast!" said Sir Edward. "What was it—a serpent?"

"Oh, no ; it could not have been a serpent, for it had feet."

"And great scales on its back, and such a terrible head and mouth!" cried Amy. "Oh, it was a terrible monster!"

"Ah," said Don José, smiling, "it was an iguano. They are not dangerous, though to a stranger sufficiently horrible."

"Ah!" cried Sir Edward, suddenly, and fixing his piercing eyes on Don José ; "it was an iguano, and they are not dangerous, you say?"

Don José coloured slightly, and looked confused under the Englishman's piercing glance. Sir Edward was amazed that Don José, who pretended not to know English, could understand from the description of Amy and Harry what kind of animal it was. Still keeping his keen eye on his face, he said—

"Excuse me, senor, but do you understand the English language?"

"Only a few words here and there," said Don José,

smiling, and trying to look unconcerned. "I understood and guessed more from the gestures of the young lady and her brother than from the words."

It would have been unpolite to appear to disbelieve their host's words; so Sir Edward bowed politely, though his mind was filled with misgiving.

Sir Edward then explained to Amy that the creature was harmless. The colour came back to her fair cheek, and she laughed at her former folly.

All now seated themselves, and partook of the repast which Don José had provided for them. At the conclusion, Sir Edward thanked their host in his own name and that of his companions.

"I hope, gentlemen, and you, senorita, that I shall have again the pleasure of seeing you, before I leave this country."

"Before you leave!" said Sir Edward, in surprise; "are you, then, going to leave?"

"Yes; to-morrow evening, at the latest, I set sail for Spain."

On learning that Don José would only remain for one day more in Santa Marta, Sir Edward's involuntary repugnance and suspicion of the man abated.

"So soon?" he said, gaily. "Well, then, Don José, if it is to be so, Captain Drake and I will wait on you to-morrow, to bid you adieu, and a pleasant voyage to Spain."

"Thanks, senor; you shall, if it pleases you, dine with me. I see so little company, that you can hardly conceive the pleasure which yours gives me. So do not forget—to-morrow, at the same hour."

Sir Edward having spoken to Francis, signified his assent to this arrangement. Then they all rose to leave.

Don José took a large bouquet of the choicest flowers from a vase on the sideboard, and presented them to Amy, saying—

“Since the terrible beast in the garden frightened you, young lady, and prevented you from gathering your bouquet, permit me to offer you this one.”

Amy, blushing, took the flowers and said—

“Oh, senor, you are too kind!”

Don José laid his hand on his heart, and bowed profoundly, at the same time regarding the young girl with an unmistakeable look of admiration and gallantry.

It was the close of the day ere Don José's visitor's left his house.

Francis Drake and Amy walked in front, while Harry, following close behind, was in deep conversation with Gideon, concerning that villanous monster which had so frightened his sister.

Lastly came Sir Edward Dudley, buried in profound thought. He was thinking of their singularly urbane and polite reception by the Spanish captain, and was wondering what could have been the cause of so much apparent good feeling on his part to them. He was not, like Francis, overjoyed at it, but thought of it with suspicion and inquietude.

His experience of the world taught him that, when people are ostentatiously and gratuitously civil, they have frequently some sinister object in view.

Sir Edward wandered slowly on, allowing the others to get far in front of him. The cloud on his brow plainly indicated that his thoughts were black and gloomy enough.

Sauntering slowly along, he arrived at a place in the narrow lane or path bordered by a little thicket of shrubs.

The others were out of sight.

Suddenly a form darted out of the shrubs, and stood in the path before him.

Sir Edward started back, for he saw before **him** a Red Indian, naked to the waist, and adorned, after the manner of his nation, with plumes of feathers and beads. His face and body were tattooed with strange and horrible devices ; he carried, slung at his back, spears, bow, and arrows, while by his side was the deadly tomahawk.

No wonder, then, that Sir Edward should start back, and feel for his sword. His surprise was the greater when the Indian advanced, apparently with no hostile intent, and said, in English, the words—

"Peace, white man. Indian not on the war-trail."

Then the savage extended his hand, and gave Sir Edward a small branch of the Abanijo tree.

Sir Edward took it in mute astonishment ; and the Indian, saying the words, "This for you," vanished as suddenly as he appeared.

"Sir Edward ! Sir Edward !" said the clear, silvery voice of Amy, calling him ; "we are waiting for you ; are you not coming ?"

Sir Edward had remained gazing in mute astonishment at the branch which he held in his hand.

He started, and hurried on at the sound of Amy's voice. As he hurried on, he examined more closely the branch.

"What can be the meaning of it?" he said to himself again and again.

Suddenly he perceived among the leaves a small slip of paper. It was twined round one of the twigs.

He proceeded to unfold it, and read some characters inscribed in a very small handwriting.

As he did so, he turned ashy pale, and let the branch fall from his hand.

The perspiration burst forth on his forehead, and he gasped for breath. No criminal going to execution could have looked more horrified.

What was it he saw which thus struck him with horror and dismay?

There were five words only written on the slip of paper.

Those words were—

“Cain, where is thy brother?”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE TREACHERY OF DON PLACIDO.

On the next day, at daylight, the *Enterprise* commenced to discharge her cargo.

Don Placido sent on board, according to his promise, twenty of his negro slaves to assist the sailors in the labour. The work commenced at four o'clock in the morning, and was completed by noon. All the packages, cases, and bales, which for two months had lain in the hold of the brig, were now safe in a large warehouse which Don Placido had given them.

Francis Drake, who had remained on board to superintend the unloading, while Will and Michael saw to the safe stowing in the warehouse, gave a shout of joy as the last package brought from England was landed on American soil.

“Now,” he said joyfully to Harry, “if Heaven only vouchsafes as good fortune to the merchant as to the mariner, in fifteen days we shall have made enough out of our venture to return to England and freight six vessels

instead of one. Ah ! ah ! Harry, my boy, I knew not till now how easy and pleasant it is to become rich ! ”

As he said these words, he perceived his friend and benefactor, Sir Edward, who was leaning against the mast, looking gloomy and unhappy.

“ My poor Sir Edward,” said Francis, “ you look ill and wan ; the noise and confusion on board troubles you. Perhaps, too, we disturbed your rest in commencing so early in the morning ? ”

The other shook his head.

“ No, Francis, the noise did not disturb my rest, for I have not lain down since yesterday.”

“ You did not seek to sleep ? ” said Francis, in surprise ; “ but it is only the guilty, the bad, who do not sleep, and you are good and noble. Oh ! this is very strange—you look, too, sad and troubled ; may I be allowed to ask what it is which grieves you ? ”

Sir Edward hesitated before he answered.

“ I am sad,” he said at last, “ and have reason to be so ; because, this very day, in a few hours, I must leave you.”

“ You must leave us ! ” cried Francis, in astonishment ; “ is it possible ? are you really serious ? Why must you do so ? ”

“ Because I must.”

“ Because you must ! That is scarcely an answer.”

“ Pardon me, my friend, but it is the only one I can give you.”

“ And where, then, are you going ? ”

“ I know not ; but chance will direct me on this, as on many other occasions.”

Francis looked at his benefactor as if he thought he had taken leave of his senses.

"Yes," continued the latter, "chance must direct me. Yesterday evening a grave event happened—an event which should be for me a happy one as well. In truth, I am sorry to be sad when I should be gay; for, perhaps, I am on the point of attaining that for which I have been striving for five years."

"And it is in Santa Marta, in a country where you have never before set foot, that this event is to happen?" said Francis, in still greater astonishment.

"Yes; see here, this branch, which an Indian gave me yesterday evening." And he gave to Francis the branch of the tree on which he had discovered the slip of paper with the mysterious inscription.

"Indian!" said Francis, "but I saw you speak to no one yesterday evening!"

"For a very good reason, for you were far from me at the time. And even had you been by my side, you would have gained but little, since I myself can scarcely understand the import of the message."

"And what meaning do you then attach to it?"

Sir Edward was about to reply, when the attention of both was arrested by a disturbance on the quay. Whilst they had been conversing on board the brig, a crowd had gathered about the door of the warehouse which Don Placido had allotted for the cargo of the vessel. In the midst of the crowd they could distinguish Will and Michael, with many of the sailors. Apparently, they were disputing hotly with a number of Spanish soldiers.

"What can be the matter?" said Francis: "there seems to be a disturbance of some kind."

At that instant he heard his name shouted from the shore.

"Come, Sir Edward," he said, running to the gangway

where the boat was made fast, "let us go ; apparently I am wanted."

Followed by Sir Edward, Francis leaped into the boat, and was rowed towards the quay.

Until they reached the land, neither spoke ; they watched with increasing wonder and alarm the strange proceedings at the warehouse.

On seeing the boat from the brig approach, Will and Michael, followed by the sailors, made their way through the crowd and hastened towards the landing-place.

Francis leapt on shore.

"What is the matter ? what is all this disturbance about ? what does it mean ?"

"It means," said Will, hurriedly, "that there is a base conspiracy to rob us !"

"To rob us !" said Francis ; "how so ?"

"You see those Spanish soldiers ?"

"Well !"

"Well, when we had safely stowed all the cargo in the warehouse, they entered, and thrust us forcibly out."

"They thrust you out ! and you did not, then, resist ?"

"Resist ! how could we resist ? there were a hundred of them ; they were all armed, and we were but twenty."

"But did they give no explanation—no reason ?"

"They said nothing ; but you know well none of us understand Spanish !"

Francis Drake looked with lowering brow and flashing eyes at the soldiers drawn up in line before the warehouse where his cargo was deposited.

"It cannot be—there must be some mistake. My friend," he continued to Sir Edward, "come with me, and ask them by what right ——"

Sir Edward interrupted, and pointed with his finger

"See, there is Don Placido himself just arrived ; let us and inquire of him."

"You are right," said Francis ; "come."

And, accompanied by Sir Edward, his brothers, and the ilors, Francis hurried up to the Syndic.

On seeing them approach, Don Placido said some words in a low tone to the officer in command of the soldiers.

These then formed a half-circle round the Syndic.

"It seems to me," said Francis, "that Don Placido is very fearful, for he takes great precautions for his safety on our approach."

"Senor," said Sir Edward in Spanish, and not heeding the words of Francis, "will you be so good as to explain by what right and by whose orders these soldiers have forcibly expelled our sailors from the warehouse you gave us, and why they now stand before the entrance, barring our way?"

Don Placido, smiling and urbane as ever, bowed politely, and replied :—

"Senor, my soldiers have expelled your sailors because they were ordered so to do. For the same reason they are drawn up before the door to prevent your entrance."

When Sir Edward explained the meaning of these words, Francis bounded forward, as if to attack the Syndic. However, his friend restrained him, and continued :—

"Ah ! you say, then your soldiers expelled our sailors, and refuse them access to a warehouse which is filled with our goods, and which warehouse you yourself specially allotted to us. By whose orders is this done?"

"By my orders," was the placid reply.

"By your orders. And for what reason ? What are we to understand ?"

Don Placido hesitated to reply. Even the most hardened hesitate sometimes to avow their iniquity.

"Senor," he said, at last, "I might, if I chose, decline to give you any reasons for acting as I have done ; but I am a just and reasonable man, and will answer you. It is in the execution of my duty as chief magistrate of Santa Marta that I order my soldiers to refuse you admittance to the warehouse. I have given that order because no government and no subjects other than those of his glorious Majesty King Philip II. of Spain have the right to trade in the ports of South America. For that reason, to my great regret, I am compelled to confiscate the cargo which you have brought to Santa Marta."

Sir Edward turned pale with anger at these treacherous words.

"What does he say?" cried Francis, impatiently.

"He says that which proves to me that my suspicions and forebodings of yesterday were correct."

"And that is ——?"

"He says, my poor Francis, that in virtue of his office of chief magistrate, he is bound to forbid all commerce by foreigners with South America ; and also that he confiscates the cargo which you have landed from the brig."

A cry of rage broke from Francis, and was taken up by his brothers and the sailors, at these words.

At that cry Don Placido hastily retreated into the midst of the soldiers.

"It is an infamy, an outrage!" cried Francis, furious
 "Speak to him again. It is impossible he can persist so villanous a design ; it is impossible that, in the name of the law, we should be robbed by thieves and by pirates, for are we not at peace with Spain?"

Sir Edward endeavoured to calm the excitement of Francis ; and, turning again to Don Placido, said :—

“ Senor, I have told Captain Drake of the unheard-of step you have taken, and he cannot believe that you are really serious. He says such infamy cannot be.”

“ I am extremely sorry for Captain Drake,” replied Don Placido, blandly as ever ; “ but the step I have felt it my duty to take is as serious as it is irrevocable. The cargo is confiscated, and will be sold by public auction for the benefit of the Government.”

“ But, senor, your actions to-day are very different from your words of yesterday. How can you reconcile the professions of kindness and regard to us, made but yesterday with such an outrage as this ?”

“ Senor,” said Don Placido, “ I am surprised that you, a man of sense, should ask such a question.”

“ And why should you be astonished ?”

“ Senor,” replied Don Placido, bowing with great politeness ; “ you will perceive, if you consider the subject, that there are certain little delicate artifices to which a man in my position must occasionally resort, as circumstances demand. Fair and easy is always better than violence. You know the meaning of the words, *suaviter in modo, fortiter in re*. Surely it is better for all that I should do my duty quietly and peaceably than that I should be compelled to use force to you or any other gentleman.”

“ Ah, I understand,” said Sir Edward, bitterly ; “ you thought you could rob us more easily by lying, than by avowing your intentions.”

Don Placido coloured with anger.

“ Have a care what you say, sir. How can you call a robbery that which is in accordance with the law ?”

“ But if such a law exist, we were in ignorance of it.”

"So much the worse for you."

"It was your place to have informed us of that law," said Sir Edward, with rising anger, "instead of treacherously beguiling us with soft words and promises to land our cargo."

"Once again, sir, be careful what you say. Every person understands his own affairs best ; everyone has his own mode. As for me, I prefer to do things peaceably and quietly. If I am wrong, it is all to your advantage. Yesterday evening Captain Drake informed me that he had arms on board to sell to the Indians. That alone is an offence against the Spanish laws, and for that alone I could, if I chose, arrest him, and throw him into prison. But I did not wish to go to such an extremity, and you reward my forbearance by impertinence and insult. I do not wish to trouble myself further about the matter ; but I promise you that, if in twenty-four hours you have not set sail for England, not content with confiscating the cargo, I will throw you into prison for as long a time as I please. And, moreover, I promise you that when you are set at liberty you will not find your brig in the harbour. That is all I have to say, so take heed."

And, with these words, Don Placido turned his back to them, and walked away.

CHAPTER XV.

THE KINDNESS OF DON JOSE.

HAVING giving utterance to these last words, Don Placido coolly turned his back.

"The scoundrelly Spaniard has completely thrown aside

the mask," said Sir Edward to Francis. "He unblushingly avows that he was befooling us yesterday, and gives us our choice between a prison and departure from Santa Marta within four-and-twenty hours."

"Prison, or leave within twenty-four hours?" exclaimed Francis; "and does the villain believe that we are such cowards as to submit to such a barefaced robbery?"

"And what will you do?"

Francis glanced angrily and threateningly towards the soldiers.

"Would you attack these thieves of Spaniards?" continued Sir Edward.

"And why not?" cried Francis, angrily. Then turning towards the sailors, he said, "What say you, my lads?—are we Englishmen to be robbed and cheated by a set of rascally Spaniards?"

"No, no!" shouted twenty voices.

"Let us go on board the brig and arm ourselves. Then let us return, and take by force that which belongs to us."

"On board! on board!" is now the cry on all hands; "let us get arms!"

The sailors hastened towards the quay, where lay the boat. Loud and angry were their cries and threats as they hurried on in a body.

Francis was about to follow them, when Sir Edward seized his arm.

"Madman! what are you about to do?" he said, "You will ruin us all!"

"Let those who fear to risk the ruin stand aloof; for me, I mean to obtain my rights at the sword's point, if need be. If you fear, do not you risk yourself!"

Francis said these ungenerous words hastily, on the spur of the moment.

Sir Edward seemed hurt at them, and replied—

“ You wrong me, Francis ; you ought to know that I am no coward. But I have had more experience of battles than you, and know the difference between bravery and mere rash folly. Now be reasonable ; surely you do not propose to defeat the garrison and take the town of Santa Marta by assault, with some forty men and a little brig ? ”

“ I propose to avenge myself on those who have robbed me, and to have my rights, though I risk my life ! ”

“ But how can you do this ? Just consider for a moment what you are about to do ! You may perhaps kill a few soldiers, who will be immediately replaced by others. Don Placido will keep himself out of harm's way, and, meanwhile, you will be exposing brave men—men who are your friends—to death and imprisonment ; for, assuredly the result of the fight will be, that we shall be all either killed or taken prisoners. Then, consider for your sister, the gentle Amy ; think of her in the hands of brutal, tyrannical, and licentious men, with no one to protect her—you, I, and your brothers all dead or captured ! Oh ! it is dreadful to contemplate, so think better of it. As for me, if you think I fear for myself, you are mistaken ; if you will rush into this mad conflict, Sir Edward Dudley will fight to the last gasp by your side. Nevertheless, once again I beg you not to do this thing ! ”

“ My friend, my benefactor, you are right,” said Francis, the tears coming to his eyes at the words of the other ; “ pardon my words, so unjust and ungenerous. For my own life I care not, but you call to my mind that, did this end fatally, I should be responsible to my mother for the blood of her children. And so,” he added, bitterly, “ you think we must tamely submit to this outrage ? I am but a poor Englishman, the captain of a small brig, which your

bounty, Sir Edward, provided me. Is it just then, because I am defenceless, that I should be robbed? But let the robbers beware! It is their turn to-day—but hear me, Heaven, while I swear a terrible vengeance on the oppressors!”

Then the young man raised his clenched fist aloft, and addressing the sailors in a loud, commanding voice, said—

“Hear me, my lads! We are now weak and powerless against these thieves and cut-throats; they insult, rob, and laugh at us. Let them beware, for if we do not get justice, I—even I, Francis Drake—will make my name and that of the crew of the *Enterprise*, a terror in Spanish ears! We came here to trade honourably, fairly, honestly, and we are met by outrage and barefaced robbery. On their heads be it—I will never rest till I have exacted a stern vengeance! We will be indeed the Demons of the Sea! From this day shall date the overthrow of the Spanish dominion in South America! I will drive them from the seas—hunt them from the land; the decks of their warships shall be slippery with gore—their rivers shall run blood! I will, ere I relinquish, turn against them the very Indians they have oppressed; I will make the name of Spaniard accursed wherever I go, and the name of an Englishman feared and respected! Now hear me, Heaven, while I take this solemn vow of vengeance!”

As he delivered these words in a loud, clear voice, his eyes sparkled, and his whole frame seemed to expand.

Even Sir Edward looked and listened in astonishment. He saw before him, not the boy-captain—the peaceable merchant—but a desperate, determined man. The fire in his eye gave force to his words, and when he finished, a thrill went through all who heard. They heard and felt in his words not the empty threatenings and boastings of

an angry man, but a solemn prophecy, certain to be fulfilled. None could analyze or account for this impression, but even Sir Edward felt it most powerfully.

A strong presentiment—a foreshadowing of a bloody future—came over him. “Francis Drake,” he muttered to himself, “your name will yet ring in every quarter of the world.”

“Here comes Don José de Castanares,” suddenly exclaimed Sir Edward; “let us see what explanation he will give of the treachery of the man he introduced us to as his friend.”

Don José approached slowly, looking about him in apparent astonishment at the crowd, the array of soldiers, and the group of sailors.

Francis rushed towards him with fury in his countenance, as if about to attack him at once.

His friend, however, restrained him, saying—

“Have patience! Let us at least hear what this gentleman has to say for his friend’s perfidy. We can then judge how far he is an accomplice.

“Don José,” continued Sir Edward, “what is the meaning of this outrage? Since you are so intimate a friend of Don Placido’s, perhaps you will explain the meaning of his base conduct. You told us that he was a brave and honourable man, and we find him a thief. You said that he was always most courteous and fraternal in his dealings with foreigners, and we see our cargo confiscated, our sailors expelled from the warehouse by his orders.”

“How! your goods confiscated—your sailors expelled?” cried Don José, in astonishment. “What do you mean? Surely I do not hear aright. There must be some mis-

understanding here. Don Placido could never act in so perfidious a manner."

"Do you doubt the fact?" said Sir Edward, pointing to the soldiers drawn up before the warehouse. "Behold our goods, and the soldiers of Don Placido, who prevent our access to them. Ask himself if it is not so."

Don José strode up to Don Placido, his handsome features flushed with rage—

"Senor Don Placido," he said, "what is all this I hear? These English gentlemen, who have been my guests, inform me that you have confiscated their cargo, and have placed a guard over it, to prevent their having access to it."

"Don José is right," says the Syndic, blandly. "In the execution of my duty I have been under the painful necessity of so acting."

"What!" exclaimed Don José, "after your professions of friendship, made but yesterday, you act thus? But you are only jesting. Enough! Jest or earnest, I demand that this go no further. I request you will immediately return to these foreigners their property, and make suitable apology, or I shall hold you answerable to me for your refusal."

"Don José," said Don Placido, quietly, "I know my own business best. I cannot comply with your request. In the performance of my duty to His Majesty the King of Spain, I have confiscated the property of these strangers; and in the execution of the same duty, unpleasant though it be, I adhere to my resolution."

"Then, Sir Syndic," said Don José, passionately, "I, even I, Don José de Castanares, a noble Spaniard, hold you responsible. I will let you know what it is to trifle

with a captain in the service of His Majesty the King of Spain. So on your head be it."

Don Placido merely replied by a quiet bow, while Don José, with a threatening gesture, turned away, and rejoined Sir Edward Dudley and Francis.

"I was mistaken in this man," he said; "I thought him an honourable Spanish gentleman, and find him a treacherous villain! No matter; I will make him pay dearly for his perfidy to you and his insolence to me! I have influence far greater than his, and will bring him to a stern reckoning."

Sir Edward explained to Francis all that passed.

This latter, who a few minutes before felt inclined to attack Don José as an accomplice of the Syndic's, now felt the greatest confidence in the handsome Spanish captain.

"I wish to convince you, gentlemen," continued Don José, "that I have no hand in this detestable treason. I will assist and advise you how to remedy this disaster. You must set forth for Carthagena without delay."

"For Carthagena? What is the distance, and wherefore must we journey thither?"

"The distance is only some thirty miles. You can journey there to-night, and return to-morrow. I myself will lend you horses. As for why you must go there, I will tell you. Carthagena is the capital of the country, and there resides the Captain-General of New Granada. I will give you a letter of introduction, informing him of the treacherous conduct of Don Placido, who is subordinate to him. I doubt not that he will immediately cause him to be arrested, and order your goods to be restored to you."

"Ah, señor," cried Francis, "you are indeed *amigo*! *Amigo*!"

least all Spaniards are not false and treacherous, like that man. You, at least, are noble and honourable."

Don José's handsome features glowed with pleasure at these flattering words. He drew his noble figure up, and then bowed with an air of proud satisfaction, saying—

"Gentlemen, I require no thanks. I merely do this to prove to you that I have no complicity in the villany of the Syndic. The name of the Captain-General is Don Ramonde Calverizo. It is to him you must hasten to lay your complaint. I told you before that I must set sail for Spain this evening. Were it not so, I myself would willingly accompany you to Carthage, and press on the Captain-General the flagrant outrage you have been subjected to. I will provide you with horses from my own stable. In further proof of my sincerity, if any one of you gentlemen still think I had any hand in this treason—if any of you have the slightest doubt of my honour—I will, although at the risk of losing my commission, by not sailing to-night, accompany you myself."

As he said these words in a frank, generous manner, Don José looked so brave and noble, that no one could any longer doubt his truth.

Francis, when the purport of his last words was explained to him, exclaimed warmly—

"Far be it from us, noble sir, to doubt your honour, or to subject you to the displeasure of your Government for our sake. We thank you from our hearts, as true and honest Englishmen, and accept the generous offer you make us of horses to convey us to Carthage. Rest assured that they shall be safely returned, and that, if ever it lays in our power, we will repay the service a hundredfold."

"And now, senors," said Don José, "the sooner you start the better. How many of you propose to go?"

"I," answered Sir Edward, "Captain Drake, and, if you can oblige us with three horses, my faithful servant here, Gideon."

"Be it so," said Don José, gaily. "Now, Senor Captain Drake, give orders to your men to return on board the brig, and follow me to my house. We will partake of a little refreshment, and in an hour's time you shall be on the road to Carthagena."

Francis spoke to his brothers, and gave the necessary orders to the sailors.

"Pardon me, Don José," said Sir Edward "but I see that my servant is not here. I will return, and order him to follow us; fear not that I shall detain you, I will be at your house almost as soon as yourself."

Don José bowed assent, and Sir Edward Dudley hurried off.

But there was another reason which prompted him to return, besides ordering Gideon to attend him.

He remembered the gentle Amy, and did not wish to leave without first seeing her, and assuring her of her brother's safety in their projected expedition to Carthagena.

He found Amy with Gideon Glossop, who delighted in nothing more than in entertaining the young girl with wonderful tales of his own and his master's prowess in the wars.

Sir Edward explained to the young girl in a few words the treachery of Don Placido, and the necessity there was for himself and Francis to set out at once for Carthagena. When he had finished, Amy said—

"And you hope to be successful in your mission?"

"Assuredly so; all men are not as covetous and treacherous as Don Placido."

"But if anything should happen to you or Francis?" said Amy, with pale face and tearful eyes.

"Why, what do you think can happen to us, Amy? We shall be well mounted and well armed, and Gideon will accompany us."

"Ah, Gideon is going with you?" said Amy, brightening up. "I am glad of that, for he has been telling me all the morning what a terrible fellow he was to fight, and how you would have been killed a dozen times had not he come to your assistance."

"Gideon is a true and faithful fellow, Amy, albeit somewhat given to drawing the long-bow as to his own achievements."

"Oh, indeed, you wrong him, for he talked far more of you than himself. He told me of the battles you had been in, and of the brave knights and gentlemen you had defeated, and of the many perils which your skill and courage had brought you safely through. Oh, indeed, I know all about it—what a great gentleman and gallant knight you are considered at the Court of our Queen. Ah, Sir Edward, you are indeed kind—you so rich, noble, and brave, to leave all the grand and great people to follow our humble fortunes!"

Amy accompanied these words with a look of such genuine admiration and gratitude that, in spite of himself, Sir Edward could not help feeling surprised and pleased.

He had stood the bright glances of many a bright eye unflinchingly, among the rich and noble ladies about the Court, and yet the soft, confiding glance of little Amy made him blush like a school-boy.

"Ah, Gideon!" cried Amy, seeing the servant, "come

here ; I want you. Now, promise me that you will never leave sight of my brother or your master ; for if anything should happen to either of them, I should die of grief. You have been telling me what a great soldier you are and how you have fought for your master before ; see that you do your best now. See ! come here, and let me bind this bit of blue ribbon round your arm, as a memento of my words."

Gideon approached, lumbering up to Amy like a young elephant. When she had fastened the piece of ribbon round his great brawny arm, he gave a subdued, grunting laugh of satisfaction.

"Faith, master!" he said, "I look like a prize beast at one of our country fairs, with my blue ribbon. Never fear, Miss !" he said to Amy "There will be some bones broken ere any harm happens to the captain or my master, while Gideon Glossop is about."

"Oh, Sir Edward !" suddenly exclaimed Amy, "I do wish I could see my brother. I would try and persuade him to let me come too. I cannot bear to let you and him go without me."

"Amy, Amy, are you going mad?" said Sir Edward, smiling. "You know we are going on horseback. We shall arrive in the evening, and be again with you ere noon to-morrow. So, little puss, don't trouble yourself any more about us. Now I will bid you adieu."

At these words Amy's gentle eyes filled with tears.

"Adieu, Sir Edward, if you must really leave us. Oh, dear ! I do so hope you will return safe !"

Sir Edward took her hand—

"What, you little silly, crying ! Come, don't be foolish. I shall be back safe enough by noon, or, at most, a few after, to-morrow—safe enough and hungry enough,

I warrant ; so see that you have a rare dinner prepared for us on board."

"Ah," said Amy, pouting, "that is just like you men—when we are full of sorrow and fear at parting, you think of nothing but the good dinner you will have when you come back."

Sir Edward still held the little hand in his. Her face was turned pleadingly and sorrowfully towards him. Now and then a tear stole from under the long lashes and trickled down her fair cheek. Sir Edward could not resist the temptation, but drew her gently towards him, and imprinted a kiss on her rich, pouting lips. Amy made no resistance, but yielded herself to his embrace with the innocence of a child, and was happy

The tears disappeared from her fair young face ; a bright flush came to her cheek, and her eyes sparkled with pleasure. For one moment Sir Edward held her fair form pressed to his ; then she gently disengaged herself, and said, blushing—

"Oh, Sir Edward, how could you?"

Sir Edward, once more pressing her hand, bade her adieu, and hastened towards the house of Don José.

Amy followed his retreating figure with her eyes, till it was hid in the luxuriant foliage of the lane leading to the house.

CHAPTER XVI

SPANISH TREACHERY.

In an hour's time, Francis Drake, Sir Edward Dudley, and Gideon, were on the route to Carthagena.

Jupiter, a black slave, whom Don José had ordered to accompany them, went first as guide.

They rode along the narrow path, cut through the vast forest by the hatchet, in Indian file.

First came Jupiter, the negro guide, mounted on a mule, then Sir Edward and Francis, and last of all, Gideon Glossop, all mounted on sure-footed Spanish mustangs.

As they pushed on through the vast forest, the trees and brushwood became denser, the gloom greater, and the silence more complete.

Nothing could be seen but grand, gloomy, great trees, rearing their tall heads heavenward, and almost excluding the light of the sun by their leafy luxuriance. Below, all about their vast trunks, the ground was clothed with brushwood and tropical vegetation, which, at times, encroached on the narrow pathway, and rendered it difficult for them to force their way.

Occasionally the oppressive silence was broken by the voice of a bird, by the rustling of a serpent darting away in terror from their path, by the rush of a deer through the thicket, or the distant cry of the puma and wild cat. Buried in thought, Sir Edward and Francis rode on in silence.

As for Gideon, he seldom talked at any time, and never ventured to speak in presence of his master, except when bidden.

Suddenly they came to a stop. A large branch of a tree had been torn away by the wind, and lay directly across their path. While the negro was employed in removing this obstruction, Sir Edward turned in his saddle, and, addressing Francis, said --

“Are you tired, my friend?”

"Tired? no, indeed!" said Francis, gaily: "I have frequently journeyed a hundred miles at a stretch, on horseback. The only thing that troubles me is, our being compelled to travel so slowly through this impenetrable forest."

"True; this is indeed a most abominably narrow path; I cannot think it can be the only one to so important a town as Carthagera! Jupiter, my friend," he said in Spanish to the negro, "are you sure this is the only bridle-path through the forest to Carthagera? Is there no other and broader way?"

The negro shook his head, and replied—

"There is no other road, senor."

"And how long shall we be before we arrive at Carthagera?"

"My master said five or six hours, did he not, senor?"

"Yes, certainly, Don José told us we could accomplish the journey in six hours at the most. Jupiter, how much further have we to travel through the forest?"

"Don José said five or six hours," again answered the negro, stolidly.

"Pest!" said Sir Edward, impatiently. "You know the road, and have travelled it before; surely you know as well as your master where we are, and what distance we have to travel?"

"Don José said we should arrive at Carthagera in six hours from the time we started," said the negro, in a tone meant to convey the idea that it was useless to question him.

But sir Edward was not to be thus baulked.

"Do you think we are a third of the way?"

"Yes; I should think we are a third of the way," replied the negro.

"Do you think we are half-way?"

"Yes, half-way," said Jupiter, nodding his head, as much as to say, "Anything you please."

With these words, Jupiter spurred his horse and trotted on, evidently to avoid further questioning.

Francis could not understand what was said, as they spoke in Spanish, but he saw by the cloud on Sir Edward's brow that he was not quite satisfied.

"What were you saying?" asked Francis.

"Oh! I was asking as to the distance to Carthagena, but he could not, or would not, answer me."

They had now arrived at a part of the forest where both the brushwood and the trees were less dense. The place at which they now were was a kind of open clearing, partly owing to nature, partly owing to the axe of the Spanish colonist.

In the centre of this clearing was a spring of fresh water, which poured into a reservoir evidently made by the hands of man.

Jupiter dismounted on arriving at this spring, and throwing the bridle on his mule's neck, proceeded to open a basket which he had hitherto carried before him in the saddle

"What are we doing now?" asked Sir Edward, in Spanish
"Why do you dismount? Are we going to halt here?"

"The horses are thirsty and tired," he said; "let them drink and rest. And I, too, am thirsty and tired, and hungry also. Don José bade me bring provisions for lunch; so, my masters, if you are wise, you will dismount, and rest awhile."

With these words, the negro brought forth from the basket some cold meat, cold fowls, some bottles of wine, and fruit.

Hardly knowing whether to be annoyed or pleased, the two travellers and Gideon alighted, and proceeded to discuss the cold provisions. Somehow or other, a strange feeling of disquietude pervaded both Francis and Sir Edward. The latter, especially, had been gloomy and discontented during the whole of the ride. Soon, however, having satisfied their hunger with the good fare which the thoughtfulness of Don José had provided for them, they commenced to discuss the bottles of old Canary wine, and their spirits rose under the influence of the generous drink.

"Sir Edward," said Francis, "do you think we shall be successful in our mission to Carthage?"

"Assuredly!" was the reply; "I cannot believe that all men are as base and rapacious as Don Placido. Besides, Don José's letter of introduction is most favourable; and, after all he has done for us, we should be suspicious, indeed, did we not put faith in his good-will towards us. Listen: I will translate the letter he has given me to the Captain-General into English:—

"To the Most Noble the Captain-General of New Granada.

"Senor,—Allow me to present to your favourable notice two English gentlemen, Sir Edward Dudley, a brave knight and soldier, and Captain Francis Drake, of the brig the *Enterprise*, in which they have voyaged from England for the purpose of trade. They are ignorant of the laws enforced in the Spanish dominions in the New World. Don Placido Ortigoza, taking advantage of their ignorance, seized the opportunity to basely and treacherously confiscate the cargo of the vessel. Knowing that such an act towards inoffensive strangers must be odious to you and

all honourable Spaniards, of whatsoever degree, I commend their case to your favourable consideration, and subscribe myself, most noble Captain-General, your devoted servant

“DON JOSE DE CASTANARES,
“*Captain of the Royal Spanish Frigate,
the Santissima Trinidad.*”

While Sir Edward was reading this letter, and Francis listening in rapt attention, Gideon had risen, and appeared to gaze around and listen with great earnestness.

“What are you looking and listening for, Gideon?” said Sir Edward, surprised at the strange behaviour of his servant.

Gideon suddenly darted into the bushes, and after an absence of a few minutes, as suddenly returned.

“Well, Gideon, what is it?” asked his master again.

“I was looking for the negro; I saw him but ten minutes since, along with the horses, at some fifty paces’ distance!”

“Oh! perhaps he is lying down asleep at the foot of one of the trees,” said Sir Edward, carelessly.

“And the horses—are they also lying down asleep? for all four have disappeared!”

“What!” said Sir Edward, starting up, “the horses gone! nonsense!”

“Oh! but it’s no nonsense! I have looked all round, and can see nothing of them. The black has taken the opportunity, when we were not looking, to make off with them.”

Sir Edward and Francis now made the forest ring with their shouts, calling on Jupiter. But the only answer was the echo of the forest, or the scream of some wild bird startled by the unwonted sound.

"Perdition!" exclaimed Sir Edward, after some vain shouting. "It is too true; that black scoundrel has indeed decamped, taking the horses with him, and here we are alone in the middle of one of the vast New World forests!"

They remained in silence, listening intently for some time. Then they gazed in blank dismay in each other's faces.

"Master," at last said Gideon, "you are wise, and can comprehend that which puzzles a poor devil like me. What is the meaning of this? Why has the black left us, and taken the horses?"

Sir Edward was silent.

Francis watched the expression of his countenance, and replied—

"My good Gideon, you are right; your master understands the meaning of this, and so, also, do I!"

Gideon remained in expectation of the mystery being explained to him.

"The black has abandoned us," continued Francis, in a solemn voice, "because his master, Don José, is a treacherous Judas, who was deceiving us with soft words this morning, as the villain Don Placido deceived us yesterday. The negro has abandoned us because he was ordered so to do, and because the letter was but a snare and a trap. He has left us and taken the horses, because it was never intended that we should reach Carthagena, but that we should wander about till we perish in these vast forests!"

The young captain stopped, overcome by the dreadful thoughts which crowded upon him.

"Great heavens! what can have been the motive of this man in betraying us? Why did he instruct us to leave Santa Marta? He is in league with Don Placido, that is

evident, for this morning he pretended to take our part against him! What new infamy do they design against us? for it must indeed be an infamy, since our absence is necessary for their designs."

"Sir Edward," he cried to his friend, who remained buried in gloomy thought, "speak! You have the same suspicions, the same thoughts as me—is it not so? Our ship, our crew, my brothers, and my poor little sister in the power of these ruffians, and we miles away in the depth of the forest!"

Sir Edward replied not; he remained silent. Pale, with haggard eye, he gazed vacantly into the gloomy depths of the forest. He seemed for the moment overcome, dismayed; for a suspicion more dreadful than anything Francis imagined, had taken possession of his soul.

Suddenly he aroused himself, and, with a bitter imprecation, brought his hand forcibly down on the shoulder of Francis.

"Come, my friend," he said, in a husky voice, "it is time for us to be moving. This is not the time to give way to despair. Whatever Don José designed in separating us from our friends, it is for us to frustrate his design; and, by heavens, we will do so, or my name is not Sir Edward Dudley! We have been three hours in coming here; we will be back in half the time. The horses are gone; no matter—we will hasten back faster than they could carry us. Come—come, let us be moving. Your brothers, your sailors, your sister, are perhaps at this very moment calling to us for aid."

So saying, Sir Edward hurried from the open space towards the forest, followed by Francis and Gideon.

But an unforeseen obstacle presented itself. There were several other paths leading from the clearing besides

the one by which they had entered. While they were waiting in uncertainty as to which route to take, Gideon, who had been closely examining the ground, gave a cry of satisfaction.

"This way, my masters," he cried, "this way! This is the path by which we entered. See! here are the marks of the horses' hoofs."

Then they all hastened down the path which Gideon indicated, and once again plunged into the gloomy depths of the forest.

"If the negro does not urge the horses any faster than when we before came this route, we shall soon catch him up, at the pace we are going," said Francis.

"I fear not," said Sir Edward; "it is reasonable to suppose that, once beyond earshot, the black would press on at full speed."

They were now going at a long, swinging trot, which they kept up for half an hour, when they came to two paths.

This rendered it necessary for them to pause and choose one.

After a little search, they again succeeded in finding the hoof-marks, and dashed on as before.

They had not gone many hundred yards, when a clap of thunder and the rapidly increasing gloom warned them of an approaching storm.

They had barely time to shelter themselves in an immense hollow tree, when the sluice-gates of the heavens were opened, and the rain descended in torrents. The lightning flashed, the thunder roared, the wind howled and whistled among the forest-trees, the rain came down as it never does elsewhere than in the tropics.

But if the storm was terrible while it lasted, this was

not long. In about twenty minutes it was over, and they emerged from their shelter, and again made the best of their way onwards.

They knew not, at the time, of the misfortune caused to them by the deluging rain ; but at their next halt in doubt as to the road, it was painfully forced upon them. On searching, as before, for the hoof-marks of the horses, they saw at once that they were completely and entirely effaced by the rain.

They gazed at each other for a moment, in dismay.

There were three paths, and they knew not which to take. At last Sir Edward spoke—

“ Gideon,” he said to his servant, “ climb one of those big trees.”

Gideon, without a word, obeyed ; but Francis asked in surprise, “ To what advantage ? We are here in a species of valley, consequently the view will be bounded by the hills.”

“ My friend,” said Sir Edward, “ you observe, even in the dense obscurity of the forest, that now the storm has passed, the sun is shining.”

“ True ; and then ? ”

“ Well, although we can perceive, by looking upwards at the sky, that the sun is out, we cannot tell, from the denseness of the forest, in what direction it is. Gideon, when he shall have attained the top of one of those gigantic trees, will be able to see. It is now evening, and the sun is in the west. We came from the east, consequently, if we take that path which will leave the sun at our backs, we shall be right.”

“ Ah ! Sir Edward, you are indeed wise. Neither I nor Gideon would ever have thought of that, I feel sure.”

“ Gideon,” said Sir Edward. “ can you see the sun ? ”

"No, but I can see by the sunlight in the mountains in which direction it is."

"Point it out."

Gideon did so.

"Good," said Sir Edward, indicating one of the three paths; "this, then, must be our road."

Gideon hastened to descend the tree, and they resumed their route at the same pace as before.

Suddenly Gideon halted, and gave a cry of astonishment.

"What is the matter?" said Sir Edward and Francis together.

"Why, as we run along the path, I have several times thought that I saw animals of some kind running also in the forest, but always in the same direction as ourselves."

They all gazed anxiously into the forest, but could discover nothing.

"Fancy, Gideon, fancy," said his master, "your senses deceived you."

They resumed their course, Gideon grunting out—

"No fancy—no fancy; whatever they were, I saw them."

All now kept their eyes about them.

Several times both Sir Edward and Francis thought they could discern moving figures in the forest; and, as Gideon had said, these figures always seemed to be going in the same direction as themselves.

This time it was Sir Edward who stopped, and exclaimed—

"By Heavens! Gideon was right; there are figures of some kind continually keeping pace with us. Be they shadows, phantoms, or what not, my senses cannot have deceived me—I saw them!"

All three gazed anxiously into the forest

Suddenly Francis seized Sir Edward's arm, and pointed to a large tree, distant about a hundred yards.

They saw crouched at the foot of this tree a figure.

On observing that he was seen, the figure rose and advanced towards them. Two other figures came from behind the tree and followed the first.

They were Indians. As they approached, the travellers gazed in wonder, not unmixed with alarm, at their strange appearance.

They were naked to the waist, around which was bound a short tunic of buffalo hide, ornamented with feathers, beads, and locks of hair, which they afterwards learned were scalps.

Fantastic head-dresses of plumes of feathers, and buffalo hide moccasins, completed their attire.

Their bodies and even faces were tattooed all over, so that hardly a spot could be found of the original tawny skin.

They carried for weapons bows, arrows, tomahawks, and scalping-knives.

The three travellers closed up together in uneasiness at the approach of these savages. They knew not whether their intentions were hostile or otherwise.

Sir Edward and Francis looked to their pistols, while Gideon, with his pocket-knife, cut a large knobbed branch from a neighbouring tree, to serve, if need be, for a club.

Their attention was so engrossed by the approach of the three savages whom they had first discovered, that it was some time ere they knew that three others were approaching from the other side.

Sir Edward Dudley recognized, as they approached, the

Indian who the day before had given him the branch of the Abanijo tree, with the inscription.

Not knowing whether they came in friendship or enmity, he nevertheless thought that he might obtain a solution of the mystery, and at the same time be directed on the right road to Santa Marta.

Accordingly he advanced towards them, and holding up his hand as a signal for them to halt, said—

“ I see among my brothers a warrior whom I know, for I have seen and spoken to him yesterday at Santa Marta, when he presented me with the branch of an Abanijo tree, on which was a slip of paper with an inscription. I offer him my hand in friendship.”

Then he waited for a reply.

“ What does the pale-face warrior say ? ” said one of the Indians. “ The pale-face must speak to us in the language which the Spaniards have taught us, if he would be understood.”

“ Good ; my brother is right,” said Sir Edward, in Spanish ; “ but I thought that the Indian warrior knew the English tongue, for yesterday he spoke to me in English. My brothers, we are lost in this forest. Will the red-skin warriors guide us to Santa Marta ? ”

The Indians muttered to each other for a minute ; then he who had before spoken said—

“ The warriors whom the pale-faces now see before them belong to the most numerous tribe of the Ottamankos. The Spaniards are the enemies of the Ottamankos ; they have kept them in servitude, they have ravished their young maidens, and have ravaged their forests and hunting-grounds. The Ottamanko warriors, therefore, have sworn eternal enmity to the Spaniards.”

"I can conceive that my brothers hate the Spaniards ; but we also hate and are enemies to the Spaniards. Therefore, without breaking their words, the Ottamanko warriors can conduct us to Santa Marta."

The Indians remained silent, as if in reflection.

"Why is it, then, if the pale-faces are not Spaniards, but hate the Spaniards as we do, that they are in a country of which the Spaniards claim to be masters? Whence come my brothers, and what do they here?"

"It is too long a tale to be now told," said Sir Edward, "the evening is far advanced. Answer, yes or no. Will one of the red-skin warriors conduct the pale-faces to Santa Marta for a suitable reward? Answer quickly, yes or no, for we have no time to lose."

The three Indians who had appeared from the forest on the other side now joined their friends, and they all conversed together in a low voice.

At the last words of Sir Edward, pronounced in an imperious and commanding tone, the Indians frowned, and looked menacingly towards the three white men. The Indians still kept muttering together in their own tongue, casting, ever and anon, threatening glances on the white men.

"Of what use to stay here?" said Francis, impatiently. "If they will not serve us as guides, they will not, that is all, and we must endeavour to find our own way, that is all. Come!"

"Not so fast, my dear Francis!" said Sir Edward. "Perhaps we shall have more trouble with these savages than you think. I like not their looks and gestures."

"Do you suppose, then, they will dispute our passage?"

"I know not. At all events, it is best to be prepared."

So saying, Sir Edward examined his pistols, which he carefully pruned.

The Indians, who watched their every motion, observed this.

Suddenly they ceased muttering together, and dividing themselves into two parties, three took up a position in the path before the travellers, three behind, each at the distance of about ten paces from them. The one who had before spoken now advanced to Sir Edward, and said—

The Ottamanko warriors will conduct the pale-faces to Santa Marta. Come !”

“My brothers are kind,” said Sir Edward ; “but wherefore have they divided themselves ?—why do they not all march together ?”

“Have we not told our brothers that we are at enmity with the Spaniards? Are the pale-faces children, that they understand not that it is to guard against a sudden attack that we march thus ?”

“Ah,” said Sir Edward, ironically, “it is, then, for fear of the Spaniards that the Ottamankos march in order of battle, with the pale-faces between, as prisoners. I thank my red-skin brothers, but we want not such precautions. Either our brothers will march altogether in front of us, or we will find our way without their aid.”

A black, threatening look from the Indian followed these words, which proved to the red-skin that the *ruse* which he thought so cunning was unsuccessful.

“The Creeping Snake is a great chief,” said the Indian craftily. “Why, then, does my white brother suspect him ?”

“I suspect nothing,” said Sir Edward, with an irony he did not attempt to conceal ; “but I and my companions

have our own customs. One of these customs is, when on the march never to let any person walk behind us."

"Good!" said the Creeping Snake, with apparent frankness. "Since it is my brother's wish, the Indian warriors will march in front, all together."

"Good!" said Sir Edward, with a smile of triumph.

The Creeping Snake made a sign to the three savages behind, and they hastened to join him. Then, without appearing to take any further notice, they proceeded to lead the way, at a good pace.

"We cannot remain here, and we cannot go back," said Sir Edward in a low voice to Francis; "but I much mistrust these Indians. Either they are conducting us in good faith to Santa Marta, which I very much doubt, or they have some infernal design, some treachery, which, in due time, will develop itself. In any case, we must push on, and keep on our guard."

"No, we cannot rest here," replied Francis. "As it is, we have wasted too much time. God knows what may not have happened at Santa Marta during our absence! You think that, friends or enemies, we ought to follow these Indians?"

"We cannot do otherwise. If they mean treachery they could exercise it as well if we remained as if we pushed on. Gideon," said Sir Edward to his servant, "what think you of these red-skins—do they mean mischief?"

"Do not trouble yourself about them, master. I only hope one thing, and that is, that they will make haste if they have any treachery in view; the sooner the better, and the sooner we shall arrive at Santa Marta."

"How so, Gideon?"

"How so, master? Why, surely we need have no fear

of **six** naked savages like that ? Peste ! I would take them all myself !”

Sir Edward, **in** spite of the critical nature of their position, could not help smiling at the gasconade of his servant. Gideon was walking first ; Francis and Sir Edward followed, keeping their hands on their pistols and watching every motion of their guides.

They marched steadily on, the Indians giving no sign of intended treachery. They walked in front, one before the other, never turning their heads to the right or left, or appearing to take the least notice of the white men.

Onwards they tramped, with a long, uniform, swinging stride. Not a sound, save the occasional breaking of a twig under foot, or the rustling of the brushwood overhanging the path, broke the stillness of the forest.

As they marched on, the road became wider and less tortuous. Presently they arrived at a clump of magnificent old cedar trees, whose ancient branches, spreading from side to side, completely overshadowed them.

Suddenly, at a gesture from the Creeping Snake, the Indians halted, and ranged themselves around him in the path, thus effectually barring the path of the white men.

“What is the meaning of this ?—why do we halt ?” asked Sir Edward, impatiently.

“No matter,” grunted the Indian.

“Are my brothers fatigued ?”

“No,” again replied the Indian, laconically.

“Why, then, do we halt ?” said Sir Edward, angrily.
“My brothers trifle with us ; but we are not children !”

“We halt,” said the Creeping Snake, in a loud and terrible voice, “because it is under the shadow of these sacred trees that the white men must die !”

Scarcely were the words out of the Ottamanko chief’s

mouth, than he threw himself, with one of his warriors, on Sir Edward. Two others attacked Francis, and the other two fell on Gideon simultaneously.

The order of attack was well arranged ; two against one—terrible odds, certainly ! Certain of success, by reason of their superiority in numbers, they had disdained to commence the combat, as was their wont, by discharging their arrows, but attacked at once with the terrible tomahawk.

But the savages did not know that among the pale-faces there was so redoubtable a warrior as Gideon, who had declared that he could take all six himself—powerful words, certainly ; but even big words lose the nature of a vaunt when they are followed by valorous deeds.

At the instant that the two Indians dashed towards him with uplifted tomahawk, Gideon, with an agility not to be expected from his unwieldy form, darted on one side, and the tomahawk descended harmlessly.

The first Indian slightly lost his balance, from the force which he had put into the blow. He stumbled forward, and the tomahawk struck the ground violently before him.

Ere he could recover himself, the terrible club of the big Cornishman descended, crash, on the back of his neck, fracturing the spine. The blood gushed from his nose and mouth, and rolling over on his back, he gave a few gasps, and was dead.

The other, seeing the fate of his companion, was more cautious to attack the formidable white warrior ; but Gideon gave him no time to think. Whisking his terrible club round his head, and giving a shout to which their own war-whoops were but as babies' cries, he attacked the Indian.

The latter, astonished and confounded at the fury of the attack, and the enormous strength with which Gideon wielded the tree branch, retreated, darted on one side, and strove to avoid his terrible enemy by every means in his power. All in vain; Gideon would not be denied. He foamed with rage, and, roaring like a wild beast, kept following the Indian up, making bounds of several feet at a time. The savage disdained to fly, but kept retreating and watching an opportunity to use his tomahawk.

At last he saw one. Gideon aimed a terrible blow at him, which the Indian avoided by adroitly leaping back. Then the savage ran in, and struck at the Cornishman's head with his tomahawk. The latter held up his arm to parry the blow. The tomahawk buried itself in the tough muscle, just below the elbow

Ere the blow could be repeated, Gideon had him round the body, in the same grip which Bully Dick, at Ramsgate, found so unpleasant. For one moment they struggled together—for the Indian was a strong, wiry, active man—then over he went, up went his heels, and down went his head, and he was flung to a distance of some feet.

With a cry of rage and pain, he was hastily rising to renew the attack, when the terrible club of the Cornishman again came into play. Crash! it came down on the feather-adorned head of the savage. The skull broke under the terrible blow, like an egg-shell. Thump, thump! it came on the poor wretch's ribs, which were crushed and broken like trellis-work under a crowbar.

Gideon, furious with the pain of his wound, kept pounding away at the poor wretch's body, as he writhed in his last agony, till the Indian was nothing but a lump of bruised and bleeding flesh. A cry from his master in-

interrupted his amiable amusement. Let us see how the battle fared in this direction.

Francis received the Indian who first attacked him by a pistol-shot. This took effect full in his breast, and the savage fell backwards with a groan. Having thus put one of his enemies *hors de combat*, he threw himself furiously on the other. This latter was the youngest and weakest of the warriors, and although he fought with desperate bravery, the long sword of Francis reached him when his own tomahawk was useless.

Meanwhile Sir Edward Dudley was not so fortunate. He, too, at the first attack discharged his pistol, but it only wounded the savage in the shoulder. He had placed his back to a tree, and was defending himself desperately against the tomahawks of the two Indians with his sword.

The contest was an unequal one, and the Englishman, despite of all his skill, was hard pressed. At last, he succeeded in wounding one of his assailants. This gave him an opportunity of taking a more favourable position. Accordingly, he placed his back against a tree, and renewed the conflict.

Suddenly, however, one of the Indians ceased attacking with the tomahawk, and rapidly unslinging his bow, proceeded to fit an arrow to the string.

It was this action which caused Sir Edward to cry out, "Gideon, help !" for he saw at once that, while one kept him employed with his tomahawk, the other could kill him at his ease with an arrow. On hearing the cry, Gideon desisted from his pleasant occupation of pummelling the dead, and hastened to the assistance of the living.

"Coming, master, coming !" said Gideon, at the same time giving a shout that made the Indian start.

The latter discharged one arrow, which whizzed close by Sir Edward's ear, burying itself in the tree, and then, throwing down the bow, again attacked him furiously with the tomahawk.

In a second Gideon was upon him. The savage saw him coming, and turned ; but he turned too late, for, misjudging the agility of the clumsy-looking Cornishman, the latter was upon him ere he could aim a blow at him with his tomahawk. In an instant the great muscular arms of Gideon were around him—one arm was around his neck, while the other encircled his body at the waist.

Sir Edward, profiting by the opportunity, dashed forward, and attacked the other savage in turn. He was a skilful swordsman, and after one or two passes his long sword-blade went hissing through the naked body of the Indian, and passed out at the back. The red-skin dropped his weapon, and with a loud cry fell backwards, and lay writhing in horrible agony, for Sir Edward's sword had passed between his ribs, and through his lungs.

Meanwhile, the other was but a child in the grip of the Herculean Gideon. This latter had shifted his hold, and now held the unfortunate in a grip of iron by the throat with both hands. The Indian's tongue protruded, and his eyes seemed about to start from their sockets. He grew black in the face, and struggled fearfully, making horrible grimaces, as Gideon's terrible grasp grew yet tighter and tighter.

At this moment Francis had closed on his antagonist, and had succeeded in throwing him to the ground. Then he drew his poniard, and plunged it up to the hilt in his throat. He drew it forth, and the life-blood gushing from the deadly wound, poured in torrents over the naked body of the defeated red-skin.

Francis arose, and gazed around him. With that last stab the strength of the Indian faded away, and his eyes began to glaze in death.

Meanwhile, the redskin whom Gideon had, bulldog-like, by the throat (no other than the chief, the Creeping Snake himself) was in a bad way. A very short time more of that Herculean grip, and all would have been over with the Ottamanko chief. Fortunately for the poor wretch, however, Sir Edward Dudley took pity on him, and said to Gideon—

“Enough Let him go ; he is past injuring us any more.”

Gideon reluctantly relinquished his prey, who fell to the ground in a state of insensibility.

A silence, broken only by the puffing and snorting of Gideon after his great exertions, and an occasional groan from the dying warrior whom Sir Edward had run through the body, succeeded. Then that, too, ceased ; and Gideon, recovering his wind, gazed round in gloomy satisfaction at the scene of carnage.

It was, indeed, a fearful sight. In place of six strong, athletic warriors, who, five minutes before, bounded towards them with uplifted tomahawks, there were now five ghastly corpses, and one half-throttled wretch more dead than alive.

“Well, master, did I do my part ? Didn’t I tell you I could take all six of these naked vagabonds myself ?”

“I think I’ve given two of them what it will take them some time to get over.”

So saying, Gideon pointed to the horribly bruised and mutilated remains of the two who had met their deaths by his club.

"Horrible, horrible!" said Francis, turning away his head from the dreadful sight.

Gideon chuckled grimly, and giving one of the dead bodies a kick, thus apostrophized it:—

"Ah, you varmin, you—you tawny, ugly ape! You thought to get the best of it by double-backing! Two to one, eh? Perhaps you thought we were Spaniards. Faugh! you ugly, naked brute, I'd take a field-full of the likes of you myself!"

It was evident that Gideon's blood was up. His was one of those slow, slothful dispositions, which, when once aroused, are very fiends incarnate in their rage and hate.

Even the death of his antagonists did not seem to appease his rage, for, with a snort and a grunt, he bestowed another kick on the dead body, apparently disappointed that he could discover no signs of life.

"Gideon," said his master sternly, "respect the dead. They attacked us treacherously, and have met their just doom. Throw some water in the face of this one you would have choked, and see if you can revive him."

Gideon sullenly obeyed, but looked as if he would have much preferred to have completed his work, and sent the red-skin to join his companions.

Francis gazed around him in undisguised horror. The way in which he had disposed of his two antagonists sufficiently proved that he was no coward; but he might well be excused for feeling faint and sick at the scene. This was his baptism in blood; and now that the fierce excitement of the battle was over, a reaction set in, and he regarded almost with remorse his own share in the carnage.

The glaring, sightless eyes, dreadfully staring up to

heaven—the blood-stained, mutilated forms of the red-men produced on him an impression which he never forgot, even in after years, when scores fell by his hand, and hundreds by his orders.

The Creeping Snake now began to come to his senses.

“Is he coming round, Gideon, or have you sent him to his long home by that grip of yours?”

“No such luck,” muttered Gideon. “The red vagabond is coming round fast enough. Here, wake up, you naked brute!” said the Cornishman, giving him no gentle kick; “my master wants to speak to you.”

The red-skin opened his eyes, and, groaning deeply, raised himself on his elbow.

“Give him water to drink,” said Sir Edward. “Poor devil! I can’t help pitying him, although he brought it on himself by his treacherous attempt.”

Gideon obeyed, and the Indian drank deeply from Gideon’s keg, rewarding him, however, for the good off with a scowl of hatred instead of thanks.

Sir Edward marked it, and said, half-admiringly, to Francis—

“See that red-skin’s look at Gideon! What a subject for a painter! Defeated, wounded, half-choked, his five warriors slain, he yet gazes fiercely on his late antagonist, as if he would like to renew the conflict. His spirit, treacherous as it is, is still unconquered.”

The Creeping Snake was now sufficiently recovered to rise.

“Give me your handkerchiefs, gentlemen. This naked savage is not to be trusted, by his looks; so we will just bind him, to make all safe.”

There was no denying the common sense of this, so Gideon bound the captive warrior’s arms securely; then,

with assistance, he rose to his feet, and gazed round at the scene.

There lay his five warriors, all dead—gone to their happy hunting-grounds. He gazed sorrowfully on them one by one, and then, turning his eyes on his victors, an expression of malignant ferocity and hate came on his features, which would well have become a fiend.

“Let us leave this horrible, this frightful scene!” said Francis, who could not overcome his feelings.

“Frightful!” grunted Gideon; “it seems to me it would have been a good deal more frightful if it had been ourselves instead of these naked brutes who lie on the grass.”

“Come, let us leave this,” said Sir Edward. “Gideon, bring on your prisoner; I want to ask him some questions.”

“Come on, you bare-legged brute!” said the Cornishman, dragging him on. “My master wants to ask you some questions; so mind you answer them truly, or it will be the worse for you!”

Then, seeing that his prisoner did not understand a word he said, he marched him on in silence, until, at a signal from his master, they stopped under a wide-spreading cedar-tree. Gideon brought the chief up before Sir Edward, who regarded him fixedly.

“The red-skin warrior now sees the result of his treacherous attempt on his white brothers,” said Sir Edward, in Spanish.

“The Creeping Snake is a prisoner; his warriors are dead—good! The pale-faces are strong; it is their time now.”

“Strong and generous. It depends on the Creeping Snake himself whether he will be free or not.”

The Indian warrior looked incredulous.

"And what do the pale-faces wish the Creeping Snake to do?" he asked.

"To guide us where you promised to guide us—to Santa Marta; that *is* all."

The Indian bowed his head.

"Good!" he said; "the pale-faces shall be in the Spanish town in less than two hours."

"But remember this," said Sir Edward, reloading his pistols—"I know not whether the road which you have already brought us is the right one, nor does it matter; but this you can rely on—if we are not in Santa Marta in three hours from this, I will kill you—shoot you like a dog!"

The Creeping Snake again bowed his head.

"Before the sun sets," he said, "the pale-faces shall be in Santa Marta. Come—let us march; for it is yet far to go to the town of the Spaniards."

"Forward, then," said Sir Edward; "and, once again, let me caution you, red-skin, against a fresh attempt at treachery. Gideon, see to your prisoner."

"Master, if he looses his arms from the bonds, he must be the very devil. And even then, 'twould be of little use to him; for his brains should be scattered abroad before he could move a yard."

They marched on in silence along the narrow path which the Indian indicated. Neither Francis nor Sir Edward remembered the road; indeed, they felt certain it was not the one they had travelled in the morning.

As the evening closed in, and the sun approached the horizon, their uneasiness increased. Still, their guide strode confidently on in front, by the side of Gideon, who never for a moment took his eye from him.

For another half-hour they kept on, and still no signs of their issuing from the gloomy forest.

The sun was now on the point of setting, and in another half-hour they would be in darkness ; for in the tropics there is little or no twilight.

Sir Edward gave the word to halt, and striding up to the Indian, said sternly—

“ The Indian warrior has lied again to the white man. It is night, and we are not yet at Santa Marta.”

The Creeping Snake replied calmly—

“ The pale-faces have ears—let them listen.”

They did so, and could distinguish a low, faint murmur.

“ Ah !” cried Francis, gladly recognizing the familiar sound ; “ it is the sea—we are close to the coast !”

“ Forward !” said Sir Edward, setting the example. “ Time is precious ; we know not what may be happening even at this moment.”

In a quarter of an hour more they emerged from the forest, and found themselves on a rising ground overlooking the town of Santa Marta.

“ We need not keep this man any longer,” said Sir Edward. “ We promised him his liberty, let him have it. Gideon, unloose his bonds.”

The Indian smiled disdainfully as the Cornishman approached to unbind him.

This latter found, to his astonishment, that his prisoner had saved him the trouble ; for, with wonderful cunning, he had freed himself from all the artfully-contrived and securely-knotted bonds of Gideon.

The latter gave vent to an expression of astonishment.

The Indian smiled contemptuously, and said—

“ The Creeping Snake is a great chief. The white man

must get stronger bonds than those of cotton and leather to bind him ! ”

Both Sir Edward and Francis looked with surprise, mingled with admiration, at this proof of the consummate address of the red man. Scarcely, however, had the Indian given expression to his boast, than Gideon, who was ill-pleased at being thus outwitted, suddenly seized him by the arm, saying—

“ Now, red-skin ! you got free from my handkerchiefs and straps, it is true. I will give you an English pound if you get loose from my hand.”

With these words, he exerted all his enormous strength, and compressed the arm of the Indian with terrible force. The nails absolutely buried themselves in the flesh. Still, although the pain must have been intense, the Creeping Snake never allowed a muscle of his face even to quiver.

When Gideon removed his hand, the flesh beneath it was bruised and blackened by the terrible force of the grasp, and where the nails had come in contact with the skin, several drops of blood trickled forth.

“ Gideon,” said Sir Edward, angrily, “ don’t torture the man ; he has performed his promise—let him go in peace.”

Then Sir Edward, addressing the Ottamanko chief, said—

“ The red-skin warrior had no need to have freed himself from his bonds—the white man always keeps his word. The Creeping Snake is free ; let him go to his tribe.”

The savage darted off, throwing one last look of hatred and defiance on the three, ere he disappeared.

They looked after him for a moment ; then Sir Edward started forward, saying—

"Come! let us haste to the town; I have a gloomy foreboding of evil."

Followed by Francis and Gideon, he strode rapidly on, and was soon in the outskirts of the town.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ABDUCTION.

BEFORE leaving for Carthagera, Francis had left word with his brothers, Will and Michael, to lay in water and provisions, and be in every way prepared to sail immediately on his return.

Will and Michael, who were on board the brig, ordered the boat to be brought round to the gangway, to put them on shore, in order that they might procure the provisions necessary. Amy and Harry begged so hard to be allowed to accompany them, if only for an hour, that Will at last consented, and in a few minutes the three brothers and Amy were standing on the quay.

"Come, Harry, come!" said Amy, joyfully. "We will stroll about among the beautiful trees and flowers, while Will and Michael go into the town."

"Be sure, little one," said Will, "that you do not wander far, and be back here in an hour and a half at the latest. If we have not yet arrived, wait for us; we will return as soon as possible."

Amy promised compliance, and she and Harry then strolled off into the adjoining wood.

"What o'clock is it now, Harry?" she asked.

"Two o'clock struck as we left the brig. But why do you ask?"

"Because, if it is not far to Carthagera, it is possible that Francis will soon return."

"But you heard him say that they would not be back before night?"

"It is true," she replied, sighing; "but perhaps they may return sooner than they thought."

"Well, and what then?"

"Why, suppose we go a little way to meet them?"

"Let us, then, call back Will, and tell him."

"No," said Amy, "he is so cross, and will only scold. Besides, we will only go a little way."

Harry yielded to his sister, and, laughing and chatting, they strolled on along the path through the forest taken by Francis and Sir Edward some short time previously. They stopped ever and anon to gather a flower or to listen to the song of a bird, Amy prattling on all the while with childish glee and innocence.

Suddenly Amy gave a little cry, and halted.

"What is the matter, sister?" asked Harry.

"Nothing," replied Amy, timidly, and trembling as she spoke.

"Ah, you little coward! you are afraid of seeing again one of those terrible monsters we encountered in Don José's garden."

"And you, Harry—did you feel quite at your ease when the hideous great reptile was rolling its eyes and gaping its mouth at us?"

"Well, to own the truth," said Harry, laughing, "I did not feel quite comfortable. But Amy—why, I declare you are quite pale, and are trembling! Come, let us return, as you are such a little coward."

"No, no," said Amy, gazing timidly around, "let us go on. I am not frightened—only—only——"

"Only what?"

"Only I thought I heard something rustling in the brushwood. It was only fancy, I suppose——"

Amy never completed the sentence. A shriek burst from her lips, and she turned to fly. Four negroes suddenly appeared on the right and the left, and before they had time even to think of escape, they were seized and bound.

Harry struggled; but what was his strength, in comparison with that of the two gigantic blacks in whose hands he found himself? As for Amy, poor child, she fainted, and they had no further trouble with her.

The first part of their nefarious enterprize having been successfully accomplished, the negroes proceeded to carry it out. Two of them raised Harry in their arms, while the other two bore Amy's light and insensible form. They made their way straight through the forest until they came to a footpath, which Harry recognized as that leading to Don José's mansion. In a very short time they were being carried through the garden in which Amy had gathered the bouquet, and towards the house of Don José.

"What is the meaning of this?" thought Harry. "Surely it cannot be Don José who has caused us to be carried here, for he is our friend; neither I nor Amy have injured him or given him offence. No; Don José, who received us so kindly yesterday, and who to-day came so nobly to the assistance of Francis, cannot be our enemy!"

Poor Harry! innocent of the world, he did not for a moment guess at the odious project, for the furtherance of which he and his sister had been thus rudely kidnapped.

While Harry was thus wondering as to the meaning of this, the negroes had arrived at the house. They halted

here, without, however, laying down their burden. Suddenly Don José himself appeared on the balcony, and called to one of the negroes who carried Harry. They placed him on his feet, and the negro hastened within to his master. Harry could not hear what Don José said, but he gathered that he was giving orders of some sort.

The negro now returned, and again raising their burden, they carried him towards a small shed to the right of the house. Although he could not cry out, yet he could see all that passed. He realized the fact that he was to be separated from his sister. In vain he struggled, and attempted to force the gag from his mouth; his strength was as that of an infant, in comparison with that of the negroes who bore him. For one instant, he succeeded in sufficiently tearing the handkerchief from his mouth to cry out, but the next moment it was replaced and fastened more securely than ever.

"Ah, ah!" said Don José, mockingly, from the balcony, "the young bantam is rebellious, is he? See to him, Brutus—Scipio! A hundred lashes apiece, if you let him escape!"

Then Don José entered the house, humming an air.

Meanwhile, the two negroes had carried the young girl within, and placed her on a couch in a small parlour or boudoir at the back of the house and looking out on the sea. There was only one window to this room, and this was at such a distance from the ground as not to be accessible. It was elegantly, even luxuriously furnished, and opened into another and larger room by a small door. This large room, again, led into another, and this latter opened on to the balcony on which Don José appeared. The three rooms were thus *en suite*.

The negroes having deposited the inanimate form of

the young girl on the couch, waited for their master's orders.

Don José strode into the room, and with a glance of fierce satisfaction at poor Amy on the couch, made a sign for the two slaves to retire. He regarded the insensible form of the young creature before him in silence for some time ; then he proceeded to sprinkle her temples with water. This not reviving her, he cut with his poniard the laces of her corsage, and threw open her dress. Then he produced a small flask containing a powerful cordial, and poured a few drops between her lips. After a little time, Amy gave a deep breath, and slowly opened her eyes.

"Where am I?" she murmured faintly.

"With a friend," replied Don José, in English.

Amy, who was now free from her bonds, raised herself on her elbow, and gazed at the speaker.

"Why have they brought me here?—where is my brother—where is Harry?" she cried.

Then she again fell back, for she was too feeble to rise altogether.

"There, there," said Don José, in honeyed accents, "do not torment yourself, little one. Your brother is in no danger ; you shall see him again soon."

"But I want to see him now, this moment," murmured Amy, faintly.

"All in good time, my little angel, all in good time, we will talk of that by-and-by."

"Why am I here, sir? Why have you brought me here? Who are you? I do not know you."

"You do not know me! What, my little angel, you are joking, surely. You do not know me, Don José de Castanares, who had the honour to entertain you at lunch

yesterday with your brothers ! You do not know me, when it was I who gave the Captain Francis Drake a letter of introduction to the Captain-General at Carthagená, in order that he might obtain reparation from Don Plácido ; and you say you do not know me ! Really, young lady, that is too bad. Come, don't stare at me so, with your great blue eyes, as if you were frightened ! Doubtless, the manner in which you were brought here surprised and alarmed you ; but consider, my dear child, that as I had to leave in my frigate to-night, I could not stay to be particular about the means. I was in an agony of apprehension, that after the departure of Captain Drake you would not quit the brig. Judge, then, of my joy at seeing you and your young brother land and stroll into the woods. The opportunity was too good to be lost. You know all the rest ; and it only remains for me humbly to solicit pardon for the means I have taken to possess myself of you."

With these words, Don José took one of Amy's hands, and was about to carry it to his lips, but the young girl snatched it indignantly away, and rising from the couch, said—

"Sir, I do not understand you, nor can I understand your meaning in thus tearing a young girl from her friends—a sister from her brothers."

"You cannot understand why I have done this ? Then I will tell you, and let it be my excuse," said Don José. "I ordered my slaves to carry you off and bring you here, because I love you — deeply, passionately love you !"

Then the Spaniard again attempted to take her hand, but Amy, colouring with shame and vexation, started back, and cast a hurried glance round the room. 'Alas ! she

perceived that the only window was high from the ground, and that the door was closed and barred.

Disdaining to reply, she pointed to the door of the room, and said—

“Sir, will you open that door, if you please?”

“My dear young lady,” said Don José, persuasively, “I am sure you will not be so unkind, so cruel, as to persist in your request; pray consider my love, my devotion, and——”

“Will you open that door, sir?” said Amy, stamping her little foot.

“Impossible, my little angel. I wish to converse with you; so be seated, I pray.”

“Once again, sir,” said Amy, the tears gathering in her eyes, “I desire you to open that door, or——”

“Or what?”

“Or I will kill myself before your eyes!” she exclaimed, passionately, snatching up a dagger which had been left on a chair beside her.

Don José bit his lips. Amy appeared so determined, so resolute, that he feared she would carry her threat into effect.

“You will kill yourself!” he said, forcing a smile; “and why? Because a brave, noble, and gallant Spanish gentleman loves you! Surely a very insufficient reason, eh, Amy?”

“Open that door,” repeated Amy, more imperiously, pale with passion.

Don José remained as if in doubt for a moment; then appearing to yield, he said—

“So be it; since you insist, far be it from Don José to prevent you. Since my love, my devotion cannot touch your heart, I will give you your liberty.”

Don José then advanced towards the door.

Amy drew herself close to the wall, in order to allow him to pass her; still, however, keeping the poniard pointed to her breast.

Don José took from his pocket the key, and unlocking the door, said—

“I am about to give you your liberty; but before leaving me, I want you to promise that you will not mention what has occurred to any one. Promise, in the name of yourself and brother, that you will inform no one—not even Francis—of this day’s adventure.”

Amy thought she saw in that request a sign of repentance—that Don José was not quite a villain.

“I promise,” she replied, “for myself and Harry, that no one, neither Captain Francis Drake nor any other, shall hear of this day’s adventure.”

“I thank you greatly,” said Don José, mournfully, “for your kindness, and accept your word with all gratitude. You are free; your brother Harry is before, and I will give orders that he may rejoin you. You can await him in the garden.”

The door was open. Don José drew back to allow the young girl to pass; but at the moment that she arrived at the threshold, he suddenly threw himself on her, and seizing the dagger, wrenched it from her hand.

Amy, relying on the good faith of the Spaniard, was taken quite unawares, and could make but a feeble resistance. In an instant she had lost her weapon, and the strong arm of Don José encircled her body.

Then commenced an unequal struggle between the strong man and the weak, defenceless girl. It was the struggle of the gazelle against the tiger—and the tiger prevailed!

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE RESCUE.

It was night when Sir Edward, Francis, and Gideon arrived on the quay, after their perilous and unsuccessful expedition to Carthage.

Francis hailed the brig ; but before a boat could be sent off, Will and Michael came running up.

It was evident by their excited manner that something had gone wrong.

"Where is Amy?" instantly asked Sir Edward; "is she safe?"

"Alas! we know not," replied Michael; "she has gone — disappeared, and we can discover no trace of her."

"Gone!" almost shouted Sir Edward; "then my suspicions were well founded."

"Your suspicions!" said Francis; "what, then, do you suspect?"

Sir Edward said a few words to his friend in a low voice.

The other brothers could not hear them, but they distinguished the words "Don José."

Francis grew ghastly pale; he clenched his hands and set his teeth.

"Will, Michael," he said, in a hoarse voice, "take some of the crew, and scour the forest, in case they have lost themselves. Sir Edward and I will go in another direction, where we think we have a clue."

Will and Michael, accustomed to obey their brother, were going, when Francis said—

"Stay a moment; have you seen or heard anything of Don José?"

"Nothing."

"And the Spanish frigate *Santissima Trinidad*?"

"She was to have sailed this evening, but she has not yet commenced to heave the anchor up."

"Good; we will meet again on the quay at midnight, when I trust the lost one will have been found."

Then Francis and Sir Edward hurried away in the direction of the house of Don José.

"You think, then," said Francis, in a low voice, "that this was a plot on the part of this Spanish captain; that he purposely got us out of the way in order to carry out his designs."

"I think—I fear so," replied Sir Edward. "I remarked yesterday the bold looks which he cast on her, but did not wish to disquiet you by calling your attention, as I thought I might, after all, be mistaken. Now, however, it is but too plain; I feel convinced that Don José has carried her off, and that she is now either at his house or on board the frigate."

"Ah! I pray Heaven she may be at the house," said Francis; "we will rescue her at the sword's point. If we three are not sufficient, our forty sailors and my brothers can easily overpower Don José and his slaves. Ah!" he hissed between his teeth, "but we will have revenge for this! We will fasten up all the doors when we have rescued poor Amy, set fire to the house, and roast the perfidious wretch and all his gang alive!"

One would hardly have thought that it was the same man speaking, who, a few hours previously, shuddered to look on the dead bodies of his slaughtered enemies. But the terrible suspicion which haunted him, as well as Sir Edward, of the last infamous outrage committed, had turned the mild, kind-hearted Francis Drake into a very

tiger. He thirsted for blood with an intense longing ; nothing but blood could appease his just rage.

The three hurried rapidly on in the direction of Don José's house.

They arrived at the gate of the garden where they had before entered.

Francis, burning with rage, was about passing in, but Sir Edward took his arm, saying—

“ Not that way, my friend ; it behoves us to be wise as well as brave. Come round to the back of the house ; we can then reconnoitre at our leisure.” Then skirting the fence, they made their way cautiously round to the back.

Gideon pulled some of the stakes from the high fence, so as to make a sufficient opening, and then the three passed in. They crept slowly and cautiously round, only exchanging a word now and then in a low voice.

When they were at some fifty paces' distance from the house, they again paused to survey their position.

All was dark and still as death. It almost seemed as if the house were deserted. A faint light glimmered from a small window on the first floor, and another from a room on the basement.

They crept up to an outhouse or shed, which was almost adjoining the house, and consulted together in a low voice.

“ One of us had better go first,” said Sir Edward, “ and see where that light on the basement is from ; the window is open, so there will be no difficulty. If you and Gideon remain here, I will undertake that.”

“ The house seems deserted. What if Don José has gone on board his frigate, and taken Amy with him ? ”

“ Hush ! ” said Sir Edward, listening intently.

They all heard a faint gurgling cry. It proceeded, apparently, from the interior of the shed.

"What can it be?" said Francis, as they again heard the strange sound.

"Hush! let us investigate."

Sir Edward then drawing his sword, and holding a pistol in the other hand, groped his way cautiously around the shed, searching for the door. The others followed him, and he presently succeeded in finding the entrance. It was barred from the outside, but the fastenings were quickly and noiselessly removed. Sir Edward opened the door, and, sword in hand, entered.

All was dark. Again they stopped and listened, and again they heard the same smothered, gurgling cry.

"Gideon, strike a light," said Sir Edward; "you have flint and steel and a piece of taper."

Gideon obeyed; and in a few moments a small taper was lighted.

Sir Edward took it, and advanced into the shed. The place was large, and the taper shed but a dim light, so it was some time ere they could discover whence the strange sound proceeded. At last they discovered a form lying on the ground in one corner. They advanced to it, and examined it by the light of the taper.

"It is Harry!" exclaimed Francis, "bound and gagged like a felon!"

Soon the bonds were loosened from his limbs and the gag taken from his mouth. It was some time before he could speak, but he kept pointing towards the house in answer to their inquiries for Amy.

Francis was for forcing his way in at once, but Sir Edward, more prudent, thought it better to wait till Harry could give them some explanation. A draught of wine from a flask revived him; and, having stationed Gideon at the door as sentry, and extinguished the light, they

proceeded to elicit from Harry the history of the outrage, with which the reader is already acquainted.

Frequent exclamations of rage broke from Francis at his brother's recital.

"And Amy—where is Amy now?" he asked, wildly.

"I do not know, but they carried her into the house, and I think she is there still."

"Come, let us go, Sir Edward—let us tear her away from this ruffian!"

"Stay one moment," was the reply. "Harry, do you know where Don José is?—is he in the house?"

"I think not, for although bound hand and foot and gagged, I could still hear sometimes what was going on. I gathered that Don José was going on board his frigate, and would return at midnight to the house."

"Ah, the thief, the villain!" muttered Francis; "it was to carry off my poor little Amy, no doubt. But we will defeat that; and Amy only once safe, I pray to God I may meet this Spanish ruffian!"

Sir Edward now proceeded to creep cautiously up to the house, in order to see through the open window on the ground floor. Francis, Gideon, and Harry remained in the shed, awaiting his return.

Francis could with difficulty restrain his impatience; he fretted and fumed, and ever and anon grasped his sword convulsively, as if longing for the fray.

Sir Edward returned in about ten minutes, and reported that there were only two negroes asleep in the room from which the light shone.

The window was low, and they could easily effect an entrance. He proposed, then, that they should enter as quietly as possible, and throwing themselves on the sleeping negroes, should bind and gag them before they could

raise an alarm. Then they **could** make their way into the house, and search it from top to bottom.

This plan seemed so feasible, that it was decided upon ; and they all four sallied out, and crept cautiously towards the house.

It was now nearly eleven o'clock, and it was important that they should effect their object before the return of Don José ; for doubtless he would be accompanied by an armed party of sailors from the Spanish frigate.

Arriving at the window, Sir Edward raised himself by his hands, and sprang lightly into the room. Gideon and Harry had employed themselves in making ready bandages and gags for the negroes. Francis followed Sir Edward into the room, and they then both waited for Gideon to follow.

Gideon, unfortunately, did not enter so quietly, and one of the negroes opened his eyes at the noise. He gave a slight cry, and was about to repeat it, when Sir Edward, placing a pistol to his head, said—

“ Another word—another sound, and I blow your brains out ! ”

The nigger cowered down in alarm. Meanwhile, Francis and Gideon seized and bound the other negro, who, taken thus by surprise, did not offer any resistance.

Having gagged one of the slaves, Sir Edward proceeded to interrogate the other in Spanish.

“ Now, you black scoundrel ! ” he said, “ where is the young lady whom either you or some of your fellows carried off, by Don José's orders ? ”

The negro at first protested that he did not know—that he had seen no young lady ; but being further pressed, and threatened with instant death if he did not tell, he confessed that he had seen the young girl, but that he did

not know where she then was. He thought that Don José had taken her on board with him.

This was all they could elicit from him, so they determined to search the house for themselves. First, however, they gave Harry a loaded pistol, and left him as guard over the two blacks, instructing him to shoot them should they offer the slightest resistance, or attempt to free themselves.

They found that the room in which they were had no communication with the rest of the house, but that the door opened into the garden in front. They did not open this door, but passed out at the window, in the same manner as they had entered.

Arrived at the front, they tried several doors in succession ; but all were fastened. Francis then, with sailor nimbleness, clambered up the trellis-work, and gained a footing on the balcony, leaving Sir Edward and Gideon as guards below. Passing along this balcony, he came to the window which opened on to it. This was unclosed ; so, without hesitation, the young Captain passed into the saloon. He advanced into the centre of the room, and listened. All was still ; it appeared as if the house was entirely deserted.

"Perhaps," thought Francis, "there is no one in the place but those two negroes below."

He now struck a light, and lit the taper with which he had provided himself. He now perceived that he was in a large long room, with two doors—one on his right hand, the other on his left. He first noiselessly opened the door on his left, and perceived that it led out on to the landing at the head of the stairs. Glancing down these latter, he saw a light proceeding from a half-opened door at the bottom, and heard the sound of voices.

"Ah!" he said to himself, "there are, then, people in the house. Good! I will try the other door before I venture any farther this way."

Then he quietly reclosed the door, and softly made his way to that at the other end of the room. He entered another room, smaller, but furnished much in the same style as the first. Again beyond him he saw yet another door, from underneath which streamed a thread of light. He approached cautiously, and listened with bated breath. Yes, he certainly could hear some sound. It seemed to him to resemble the stifled sobs of a woman or child. His heart beat wildly; was this—could this be Amy, and had he found her?

He advanced quite close to the door, determined to open it at all hazards. He saw that it was locked and bolted on the outside; but the key was in the lock. Whoever, then, was in the room was locked in. Still, however, determined to be prepared for any event, he drew his pistol, and held it in his right hand, while with his left he shot back the bolts. At the first sound he made by this, he heard a faint cry of terror in a female voice.

"It is Amy," he cried, recognizing the voice.

The next moment he turned the key, and threw open the door.

The room was dimly lighted by an oil-lamp suspended from the ceiling. It was the same boudoir into which the blacks had first carried the young girl. Crouched up in a corner, her head buried in her hands, he saw the form of a young girl.

"Amy!" he cried to her.

"Oh! spare me—spare me! For the love of Heaven let me leave this place!"

"Amy," again said Francis, "look up! Do you not know me?"

She looked up, and seeing by the dim light the figure of a man standing with a pistol in his hand on the threshold, she gave a faint scream, and again hid her face in her hand.

"Poor child!" said Francis; "agitation and terror have quite unnerved her; she does not know me."

He advanced towards her, and touching her on the shoulder, said—

"Amy, look up—it is Francis, your brother."

The young girl looked up, and gazing for a moment half incredulous, she arose, and threw herself weeping into his arms.

"My poor Amy, what has happened? Oh! I will be revenged for this outrage! Come, tell me all."

But a passionate burst of tears was the only reply.

"Don José," she murmured. "Oh, Francis! the fiend—the wretch!"

Again the tears flowed copiously, and she clung passionately round her brother's neck.

"Come, let us be going," said Francis; "it is time we left this accursed place; for accursed it is, and shall be from this day forth!"

He was pale as death, and his voice trembled with emotion. The few muttered, incoherent words of Amy to him spoke volumes. They told of insult and outrage; and the fiend of revenge and hatred, who before had only occupied the outworks, now took entire possession of his soul.

He raised poor Amy in his arms, and carried her through the two adjoining rooms on to the balcony.

"Sir Edward," he said, in a low voice, "I have found

her. Climb a part of the way up the trellis-work, and take her from my hands."

A cry of joy broke from Sir Edward as he heard these words, the next instant he had planted his foot on a projection on the pillar which supported the balcony, and received Amy in his arms. Francis leaped down afterwards, and all moved round to the rear, in order to relieve Harry from his watch over the two negroes.

A small inlet from the bay ran close up to the back of the house. As they were leaving the garden, they heard the sound of oars approaching.

"Come, come—quick!" said Sir Edward, peering forth through the darkness. "I can see a boat coming up the creek; they have lanterns on board, and I doubt not that it is Don José returning in the boat of the frigate."

But Francis remained immovable. His hand was on his pistol, and he seemed inclined to remain, and wreak his vengeance on the ruffianly Spaniard.

"He will pass quite close," he muttered. "'Twere easy to put a bullet through his brain."

"Come," said Sir Edward; "is it thus you would have him die? Would you let him die the death of an honourable man? No, Francis, not so—his hour is not yet come. When he dies, it shall be with a rope around his neck."

"You are right, my friend—he shall die the death of a dog!"

Gideon struck a light, and, looking at his master, said—"Shall I?"

They were standing close to a rick of dried grass used for fodder for the horses. This communicated with the outhouse, so that in a few minutes, had a light been applied, the place must have been in flames.

"No," said Francis, answering for Sir Edward, "not to-day, my good Gideon, not to-day. Some day we will have a bonfire of that house, but—but, my brave friend, its master shall be inside ; we will roast him alive—fitting doom for such a wretch !"

As the great clock of Santa Marta struck twelve, they were all on the quay. Francis carried Amy—who, poor child ! was yet sobbing and weeping bitterly—the whole distance, soothing and consoling her to the best of his power. Sir Edward Dudley walked moodily along by the side of Gideon, while Harry kept up with Francis and his sister.

Arrived at the wharf, they there found Michael, Will, and a number of the crew, who had been vainly scouring the woods in search of the missing girl.

Michael and Will gave utterance to cries of joy when they perceived Amy and Harry.

"Hurrah, boys !" they cried ; "hip ! hip ! hip ! ——"

Francis interrupted them sternly.

"Silence !" he said ; "this is no time for rejoicing. Let us hasten on board now, and then we will consider the means of revenge for the robbery, insult, and outrage that has been committed."

The two boats of the brig were brought alongside, and speedily our adventurers were being rowed across the still waters of the bay towards the brig. Looking back over his shoulder, Francis could see the house of his enemy Don José ; lights flashed from the windows, and evidently great confusion prevailed. Doubtless Don José had discovered his loss—the robber had been robbed.

"I go now," muttered Francis, "but when I return, O thief, murderer, and villain ! tremble, for thou shalt meet a terrible doom."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BROTHER'S CURSE.

ONCE on board the brig, Francis gave orders immediately to raise the anchor and put to sea. Then he carried Amy down stairs into the cabin, and having kissed her, and soothed her agitation, he bade her good-night, and went on deck to superintend the necessary operations.

As soon as he gained the deck, Sir Edward Dudley approached, and touched him on the shoulder.

"Francis," he said, "what is your intention now?"

"I go to England," was the reply, "a disgraced, insulted, plundered, and—through my sister—a dishonoured man. I go—but to return again. This time, I came to the New World as a peaceful, honest trader; when next I come, it shall be as an avenger, a corsair, a pirate!—call it what you will, Sir Edward—but I will make these dastardly Spaniards tremble and crouch when they hear the name of Francis Drake! Sir Edward," continued Francis, "you must know well, that from this day I live only for vengeance; and that vengeance I shall have, doubt not; a terrible vengeance—a vengeance so terrible, that not only America, but the whole world, shall ring with it. But before I say more, will you answer me one question?"

"Speak," was the reply; "if it is in my power, I will answer."

"This morning, you said you must leave me: are you still in the same mind?"

Sir Edward was silent.

"My question embarrasses you. Forgive me—I seek not to know your secrets; it is enough that to me you

have been a kind and generous friend. And, since we are to part, I say, from the bottom of my heart, God speed you !”

“ Not so, Francis—we part not thus. I promised that one day I would tell you all ; that day has come. Listen, and you shall hear the secret and the crime which for five years has oppressed me.”

The songs of the sailors, as they tramped round the capstan in heaving up the anchor, warned him that his time was short.

“ I will be as brief as possible ; then, when I have told you all, you shall judge whether I ought to remain here, or go with you. My name, as you know, is Sir Edward Dudley ; my family is ancient, noble, and rich. Ten years ago my father died, leaving myself and one brother, Robert, to the care of our mother. But, alas ! she survived him but a few years ; and at the age of eighteen, myself and younger brother were alone in the world. The forethought of my father had provided us with a kind and good guardian—an English gentleman in the same county ; his name was Edward Conyngham. Under the watchful eye of this good and noble man my brother Robert and myself grew up to man’s estate. But another misfortune was yet in store for us. I had scarcely attained my twenty-first year, when the storms of adversity broke over the head of our father’s friend and our guardian. By some means or other, he had rendered himself obnoxious to men high in power at Court. He was accused of treasonable practices, and, by the devices of his enemies, was condemned unheard. His life was spared, but his estates were confiscated, and a sentence of banishment pronounced against him. He escaped the scaffold, however, but to perish miserably of a broken heart. His great, proud

spirit chafed and wore his body away. Smarting under the disgrace and dishonour to which he had been undeservedly subjected, Edward Conyngham, driven from his ancestral home, his hitherto spotless escutcheon falsely branded with the crime of treason, and his knightly honour and word impugned, died, a wretched exile. Not that he ever felt the pangs of want ; my brother and I, from our ample means, guarded against that. No ; he died literally from a broken heart, leaving his only daughter, Eva, alone in the world—an orphan, friendless, and penniless.

“Eva Conyngham—who could see and know, without loving her ? Cast in Nature’s fairest mould, she had all the laughing vivacity of a girl, with all the dignity of a woman ; a beautiful, faultless face, large blue eyes, and a figure graceful as that of the gazelle—such was the fair Eva. On her father’s death, we hastened to offer her a home. At first she refused, as she thought it not decorous for a young maiden to live alone in the house with two young men, even though they were her father’s wards. We overcame her scruples by procuring an old lady, a distant relation of ours, to come and live also with us ; and in a month from her father’s death, the young and beautiful girl formed one of our family circle.

“I have said that to see Eva Conyngham was to love her. My brother loved her fondly, passionately ; and, Francis, I loved her also. My younger brother, though of an affectionate and frank nature, had one grave fault—he was obstinate and unforgiving. When he said ‘No,’ it was ‘no ;’ neither threats nor entreaties would ever bend him from his purpose. He never forgave an injury or an offence, however slight. It was in vain that I would reason with him, would repeat that human nature was

frail, sinful, and liable to error, and for that reason he should sometimes forgive the faults of others. He would only bow his head, and say—

“‘Edward, I admit of no pardon, because I do not admit the necessity of a fault or a wrong, be it ever so slight.’

“One example out of a thousand will give you an idea of the character of my brother, Robert Dudley. We had at the old hall a gardener, a man with not the best of characters. He had, however, been an old and favourite servant of my father, and for that reason I retained him. The steward of the estate discovered him in an act of dishonesty—a petty peccadillo; for this I determined to discharge him. He had, however, a wife, and children, and, moved by the tears and entreaties of these, I gave way and consented that he should have one more trial. On learning that I had determined to let the man keep his place, Robert said to me—

“‘You mean, then, to keep a thief in your service! Good: you are the eldest son—the place is yours—you are the master; but believe me that, as I hate all thieves, I shall take every means of showing my detestation.’

“And he kept his word. One day, when we were strolling together in the park, we came across this gardener. Robert, without any warning, struck the man to the ground at a blow, saying—‘Get out of my sight, thief!’ And when, some days after, the man again crossed his path, Robert did as he had done before, I found it necessary for the man to leave, as I knew my brother would never give way. This little incident will give you a better idea of my brother’s stern, unbending nature than by description.

“Six months passed happily away. Eva—beautiful.

graceful, and gay—was the life and soul of our home. Need I say, Francis, that I loved her? but, in consideration for my younger brother, I forbore to press my suit. He, on the contrary, impulsive and passionate, lost no opportunity of pressing his love on the young girl. Frequently I thought that she preferred me to the passionate and unbending Robert. Be that as it may, I resolved not to cross my brother's path, for I loved him almost as well as I loved her. If she returned his love, well and good; however much the effort might cost me, I resolved to sacrifice myself for my brother's happiness. Frequently I would catch the beautiful eyes of Eva regarding me with a mournful glance when I unexpectedly looked up. On these occasions she would colour up, and look down in confusion. Still, however, I never by word or deed let her know that I had any feeling more than friendship for her. Robert, on the other hand, became more marked and vehement in his protestations of love than ever. Whatever may have been Eva's feelings towards him, she certainly did all in her power, by receiving his galantries in a playful, half-laughing manner, to prevent him offering his hand at once. I never knew—do not now know—whether she loved him or not; but I always thought that, beneath all her laughing, playful manner, there lurked a real affection for him. As for Robert, there could be no doubt as to his feelings; he never attempted to disguise them, but, on the contrary, took every means in his power of showing the young girl his love.

“Things had progressed in this manner for nearly year, when, no longer able to bear the suspense, I resolved to know definitely whether Eva loved and meant to accept Robert as her husband. One morning I put the question frankly to my brother.

“ ‘Robert, I said, ‘do you love Eva Conyngham ?’

“ ‘Do I love her, Edward ?’ he answered ; ‘yes, passionately, devotedly, with my whole heart ! I love her better than my life, or the life of anyone breathing, and I would slay like a dog anyone who dared stand between me and my love !’

“ At these words I felt that I turned deadly pale. Not that Robert intended them for me ; for I feel convinced that at that time he had not the faintest suspicion of the truth.

“ ‘And Eva—does she love you ?’ I continued.

“ ‘I think—I hope—nay, I am sure she does.’

“ ‘If you are, then, assured of her love, why do you not ask her to be your wife ?’

“ ‘To be my wife !’ he replied, sighing. ‘You do not think, Edward, that I am not like you—rich. I am but the second son—my fortune is small ; and if I married, I should have to separate myself from you, and from the home of my youth.’

“ ‘By no means, my brother,’ I replied. ‘If Eva loves you, marry her, and remain where you are. Let us all live together ; in place of losing a brother, I shall have found a sister.’

“ Francis, you cannot imagine the effort, the pang which these words costs me. I trust that the purity of my motives, the greatness of the sacrifice I made, may be allowed to counterbalance my after crime.

“ ‘Edward,’ cried Robert, seizing my hand, ‘yours is indeed a noble heart ! You are my brother, and I accept your offer. I will go seek Eva, and if she consents to be mine, I will follow your advice. May I use your name as being desirous of our union ?’

“ A bitter pang shot through my heart at these words,

It wanted but that. I had surrendered the woman I loved to my brother from pure and disinterested motives, because I thought that he loved her and she him, and now I was asked to lend my name as urging on their union. I did not reply.

“Robert perceived my paleness and agitation.

“‘What ails you, brother—are you ill?’

“‘No, not exactly ill, Robert; but still, not quite well. You ask, may you use my name? I reply, you may, for I have only your happiness at heart; and since you love her, and she loves you, what obstacle can there be to your union?’

“‘I will seek her now, this moment; and surely she cannot refuse my prayers, joined to your wishes.’

“So saying, Robert hurried off to find Eva.

“My wishes!—what a bitter mockery! I, who loved her as woman was never before loved by man, thus to favour my brother's suit by allowing him to use my name as wishing their union! A tumult of conflicting emotions raged in my breast: at one moment a fierce desire took possession of my mind also to seek her out, and, throwing myself at her feet, to bid her choose between him and me. But I remembered that he was my brother, and my better nature triumphed.

“I was still walking moodily about the park, when I heard footsteps behind me; I turned, and saw Robert and Eva approaching. Robert was radiant with joy—Eva, pale, with downcast eyes. My brother seized my hand.

“‘Edward,’ he said, ‘we have come to thank you—Eva and I—for she has consented.’

“For a moment my heart stood still, and the blood ceased to flow in my veins.

“ ‘Robert, Eva,’ I said, ‘I wish you all happiness.’

“ My voice faltered ; I could say no more.

“ ‘Sir Edward,’ said Eva, for the first time raising her eyes to my face, and gazing at me with a strange, wild expression in her beautiful eyes, whose meaning I could not then fathom—‘I thank you. Robert has told me that you are willing and anxious for me to become his wife. I am a poor lone girl, without friends or fortune ; you are my benefactor—to you and Robert I owe everything. It is right that I should show my gratitude by obeying you in all things. Robert says that he loves me ; it is, then, my duty to comply with your wishes, and try and make him happy.’

“ I did not then understand the mournful earnestness with which these words were said. Eva seemed to speak half in sorrow, half in reproach ; and as, taking Robert’s offered arm, she turned away to leave, she shot a glance at me from under her long lashes, so full of strange but hidden meaning, that I stood in wonder and doubt as to whether I had done well and wisely.

“ Three months more rolled on, when there came, not a cloud, but the shadow of a cloud, between us. Eva’s manner to Robert was strange and inexplicable ; her high spirits, her wayward, playful ways, seemed all to have deserted her. She yielded passively to all his wishes—not joyfully or gladly, but as if she considered the submission her duty.

“ Robert, on his part, seemed more devotedly attached to her than ever. Her mild submission accorded so well with his own imperious nature, that he seemed not to miss the light of love in her eyes. She was his betrothed, and that was enough for him. He seemed to have neither fear nor jealousy, and treated her in every way as if she

were already his wife. Thus, he was not ostentatious in his attentions to her, nor did he pay her the same assiduous court as before their betrothal. He rarely took her out with him, but went frequently on hunting and fishing excursions, which kept him away sometimes for several days. On his return from these, he would resume his place by the fair Eva's side as a matter of right, and never seemed to notice the listless apathy with which she received him.

"When I sometimes hinted that I thought he somewhat neglected his fair *finacée*, he would reply—

"'Pooh! my dear Edward, it is not the part of a man to be for ever tied to a woman's apron-strings. Eva and I understand each other. I love her, and she loves me; what more do we want till we marry? I have the love of a good and beautiful girl, and she has the heart and arm of a brave and honourable English gentleman at her service; what need, then, for billing and cooing?'

"But I must hasten my story to a conclusion, for already I perceive that the anchor is nearly a-weight. Robert was absent on one of his excursions when the event which I am about to relate to you occurred—an event which has filled with sorrow and changed the current of my life.

"It was a hot, sultry summer's evening; not a breath of wind stirred the foliage of the trees; all nature seemed sunk into a luxurious repose. It was one of those calm, placid evenings which tempt a man to forget the troubles and storms of life, and to embrace unquestioned the enjoyments of the moment, forgetting alike the future and the past. The sun was setting behind the Cornwall hills when I returned to the house. Even the very domestics

seemed to have become infected with the general calm; for when I entered our ancestral mansion, I could almost persuade myself it was deserted, so still and quiet seemed everything. The hall-door was wide open, and, not seeing anyone about, I passed through into the great dining-hall. This room looked to the west, and was lighted by five Gothic windows, which opened on to a low stone balcony. Most of these windows were thrown open, so as to give free access to the balcony, and also to admit the soft summer breeze. I passed on to the balcony, and gazed forth on the scene. The sun was just disappearing behind the hills, which it lighted up with glorious golden splendour; the old oaks and chesnut-trees in the park rustled softly, as a gentle evening breeze played in their branches; the deer and cattle gathered together in groups; while the cawing rooks, returning from the fields, and circling around their nest, proclaimed that the hour for repose had come. In the distance, to the north-west, I could see the blue waters of Falmouth Bay, dotted with the white sails of many a boat and fishing-smack. Calm and still, with not a ripple to be seen on its broad surface, old Ocean himself seemed as if about to sink to rest.

“ I gazed long and earnestly, and then sank into a deep reverie. Phantoms of the past, visions of the future, floated before me, till at last I ceased thinking at all, and fell into a state of dreamy oblivion of everything. The opening of a door, and the rustling of a woman's dress, at last aroused me; I awoke from my trance—for it partook more of the nature of a trance than a dream. Slowly and dreamily—for I was still but half-awake, I turned from the balcony to re-enter the hall; as I passed into the recess of one of the old Gothic windows, I perceived a

figure seated on a low couch, half hid by the heavy folds of tapestry. It was the figure of a woman, and her face was buried in her hands, as if in sorrow.

“ ‘Eva,’ I said, ‘is that you?’ ”

“Eva started—for it was indeed her—and, without replying, turned away her head. Surprised at her silence and strange behaviour, I seated myself by her side, and again addressed her. Still no answer. Looking more closely into the half-averted face, I saw that she was in tears. At that sight the tide of love rushed with full force to my heart, threatening to burst the barriers which I had with such bitter heart-burnings erected. Who can love, and yet be wise? Had I been wise, I should have risen and left her; as it was, I took her hand tenderly in mine, and asked—

“ ‘Eva, why these tears?—what is it vexes my sweet sister?’ (How I hated the name!) ‘Has Robert been unkind? has he offended you?’ ”

“ ‘Robert!’ she exclaimed, passionately; ‘do not mention him. Is it not enough that I must marry him, without having his name constantly breathed into my ears, and by you, too?’ ”

The tone in which she said the words, ‘by you, too,’ caused a thrill to shoot through my frame. The hand I held trembled in mine, nor was it sought to be withdrawn.

“By a great effort I commanded my feelings, and said—

“ ‘But Eva, you are, as you say, going to marry my brother Robert? He loves you, and you ——’ ”

“ ‘I am to marry him, that is sufficient, Sir Edward,’ she said, in faltering accents; ‘of course, I am to marry him. Is it not your orders? Am I not a poor, friendless

girl, dependent on your bounty, and have you not desired me to wed your brother?’

“‘Eva!’ I exclaimed, in astonishment, ‘what mean you? Can you think me so base as to bid you wed against your will?’

“‘Did you not send Robert to me to ask my hand?’

“‘I asked Robert if he loved you; he told me did, and that you loved him in return. Then I bade him seek you, and offer to make you his wife.’

“‘He said that I loved him,’ she answered, mournfully; ‘well, Robert is good, kind, and noble—I *ought* to love him, for he is to be my husband.’

“‘Do you not, then, love my brother?’ I asked, my heart beating wildly with emotion as I awaited the answer.

“But no answer came.

“A tumult of passion raged within me. I held her hand, and I fancied that the delicate fingers clung with a soft grasp to mine. Again, with trembling voice, I repeated the question.

“‘Eva, do you not love my brother?’

“A passionate burst of tears was the only reply.

“Maddened with the sudden knowledge of the truth which now burst upon me, I drew her to myself, and imprinted kiss after kiss on her brow, her cheeks, her lips. I clasped her yielding form in my arms; she laid her head on my shoulder, and wept tears, not of grief, but of joy. One fair arm was around my neck, while she looked up in my face with the light of love welling up from her deep-blue eyes.

“In that mad moment all was forgotten. I forgot that it was my brother’s betrothed that I held in my embrace; I forgot the sacrifice I had already made of my love; I

forgot my brother—I forgot myself ; I forgot all but my love !

“ ‘Eva !’ I exclaimed, straining her passionately to my breast, ‘I love you—say, do you also love me ?’

“ The soft white arm tightened around my neck, and her lips sought mine in reply.

“ At this moment a dark shadow passed between us and the fading light ; I looked up, and saw my brother Robert !

“ He stood regarding us for one moment. Never shall I forget that look ; it contained all the concentrated hate of a fiend. Robert looked grand, terrible in his just rage. Pale as death, with glaring eyes, he surveyed us for some time in silence.

“ I was the first to speak—

“ ‘Robert,’ I said, with guilty, faltering voice, ‘your pardon !’

“ ‘Talk not to me of pardon !’ he cried, furiously ; ‘traitor, liar, thief ! Arise, leave your leman, and follow me. You have your sword—I have mine. One of us dies this night !’

“ Eva shrieked, and clung fainting to me.

“ ‘Throw off yon wanton, if you be a man, and follow me !’ he cried, furiously, stamping his foot.

“ ‘Not so, Robert,’ I said ; ‘she is no wanton. I have been weak, foolish, and perhaps false ; but not guilty. I knew not what I said or did ; I was mad, intoxicated with her beauty and my love—for know that I have loved her long and truly, and that I have hitherto sacrificed my love to your happiness. I cannot fight with you, for you are my brother.’

“ ‘Ha !’ he exclaimed, passionately ; ‘are you, then, a

coward, as well as a villain? Take, then, the coward's meed!

"With these words, he dashed his clenched fist in my face. I staggered backward; a crimson stream followed the blow. Instantly the hot blood of the Dudley's boiled within me. I saw no longer before me my brother, but only a man who had struck me.

" 'Lead on,' I said, 'Robert Dudley; I will follow you.'

"Then we two brothers went out together with murderous intent.

"Our lands ran down to the sea; at one place the beach was not a quarter of a mile distant. Thither Robert led the way, and halted on the sands, which the tide had left bare. He quickly divested himself of cloak and doublet. I did likewise, and we drew our swords and commenced to fence.

"Robert, blind with rage, attacked me impetuously, hissing out from between his teeth epithets of scorn and hate.

" 'Thief!' he shouted, and lunged furiously at my chest.

"I parried the thrust, and lunging at him in turn, gave back—

" 'Liar!'

"So the combat went on.

"My blood was now up; and in turn I attacked my brother as savagely as he had attacked me. He had succeeded in wounding me in the arm. The pain of the wound but increased my rage. I pressed him closely. My arm was stronger, my wind better; I was a better swordsman than he. Hard pressed, he retreated before me, still hurling at me the most insulting and bitter taunts. Blind

with passion, I redoubled the fury of my attack. Again and again I lunged at him, while he with difficulty defended himself. A thrust in carte—he parried it. I drew back my sword, and, with the quickness of thought, and ere he could reverse his guard, I lunged in tierce. He attempted to parry—too late! My sword passed beneath his guard, and—oh, horror!—the cruel steel went hissing through his flesh, right through his body, till the hilt came thump against his chest!

“With a dreadful cry of agony, he fell backwards. I drew my sword from his body, and gazed with horror on my work. He lay struggling, apparently in the last agonies. The blood flowed in torrents from his wound and also from his mouth. I knelt by his side; and, raising his head, endeavoured to staunch it.

“‘Robert! Robert! brother—speak to me!’ I cried, wildly.

“The blood gurgled up in his mouth. A look of intense hatred came over his pale, handsome face; his eyes glared vindictively at me. He endeavoured, with feeble strength, to repulse me, and through the choking blood which rose in his throat, he shrieked out a curse upon my head—

“‘Thief! traitor! murderer! I curse you!’ were the last words I heard, as I fled in horror from the scene.

“In half an hour I returned with assistance; a surgeon and a litter accompanied us. I had said that we had been attacked by robbers, and that my brother had fallen, desperately wounded. None doubted me, for from our earliest boyhood Robert and I had never been known to have had a quarrel.

“When we arrived at the spot of the encounter, to my bitter grief and dismay, we found that the rising tide had

covered the sands. In vain I rushed up to my middle into the water, and sought to find my brother, alive or dead. The waters staved, the wind rose, and the waves commenced to lash themselves furiously on the beach.

"I left the spot with a hell of remorse and despair raging in my breast, and the mark of Cain on my brow.

"I have never seen my brother since that fatal day. His body was never found, nor was my crime ever suspected."

Francis listened with breathless attention to Sir Edward's narrative, and shrank almost involuntarily from the fratricide. Sir Edward marked it.

"Ah, Francis, you may well shrink away from me, accursed as you think me by God and man! A murderer in heart I know I am; for I, in my passion, with murderous intent, passed my cruel steel through my brother's body; but in deed I am not, for I have reason to believe that my brother lives. How he escaped, or how he recovered from that dreadful sword-thrust, I know not; but I know—I feel—that he is not dead!"

"Not dead!" exclaimed Francis, in astonishment; "why, you left him, you say, in the last agonies, and when you returned the tide had covered the shore. Doubtless, it washed the body of your victim out to sea."

"Francis, I tell you," said Sir Edward, solemnly, "my brother lives! This happened five years ago. Four years ago, when worn almost to a skeleton by remorse and grief, I received a letter. It was placed in my hands by a stranger, who left, refusing to give me any information whatever. It contained only these words, in a strange hand: '*Your brother is alive.*' And that is all I knew or heard till yesterday.

"Ever since that day, I have been wandering through

"A world, impelled by an irresistible, incomprehensible impulse. I have a deep-seated conviction, amounting to a resentment, that I shall ere long behold my brother's face again. I am not in my own hands; a power which I can neither resist nor comprehend urges me constantly from place to place. This strange power, force, presentiment—call it what you will—now bids me remain in America, and in America I must for the present remain. Yesterday's adventure convinces me that the day is not far distant when I shall achieve the object which, for four long years, I have been striving for. That Indian who gave me the branch of the Abanijo tree, with the written scroll, 'Cain, where is thy brother?' could not have acted without some knowledge or design. None were witnesses of the deadly encounter but ourselves; therefore he must be alive, for no other could have the knowledge to address to me those words, 'Cain, where is thy brother?' Yes, Francis, my brother Robert is alive, and in this country, I feel assured. It was he who, for his own purposes, sent that Indian to me with the Abanijo branch.

"And now, Francis, you know all. Have pity on me, and do not utterly condemn me for a crime which was committed in the heat of passion, and which crime, I have reason to believe and know, was not followed by fatal consequences."

Francis frankly gave his hand.

"Sir Edward, I pity you, and though I blame, I do not utterly condemn. If you have sinned, you have suffered, and it is not for man to set himself up in judgment on his fellow."

Sir Edward shook warmly and gratefully the proffered hand of the young Captain.

"And now" he said, "I will tell you the cause of my

agitation at first seeing Julia Ransom. Francis, there is a higher power than that of man at work here ; for in Julia Ransom I saw the very image—the counterpart of Eva Conyngham. So extraordinary is the likeness, that, had I met her in the street, I should have addressed her as such.”

Francis gave an exclamation of surprise.

“But that is not all, Francis,” continued Sir Edward. “You have, I doubt not, often wondered at the interest I have taken in you and your affairs. Know, then, that as Julia is the very counterpart of Eva, you are the exact likeness of my brother Robert. Can you wonder, then, that I should see in this double resemblance, and the irresistible impulse which first impelled me to Ramsgate, and then to follow your fortunes to the New World, the finger of Fate—of Providence?”

“And Eva—what of her?” asked Francis ; “the cause, though perhaps the innocent one, of all this misery?”

A dark shade came over Sir Edward’s brow as he replied—

“Eva—alas, poor Eva! She never knew the terrible truth from me. I could not—dared not tell her. But still she knew all ; she saw us leave with hate and passion in our hearts ; she saw that each had his hand on his sword ; she knew that we went out to fight through her ; she saw us both go forth together, and she saw but one come back : then she knew that I had slain my brother. I could not—dared not again address her in terms of love, although love burned in my heart as fiercely as ever ; but I felt that, had I done so, the ghost of my murdered brother would have interposed and cursed the love obtained by murder !

“And now, Francis, you know all. Until I have found

my brother, I am a wanderer on the face of the earth. I remain here to find a brother ; you return here to avenge a sister—both are sacred duties. Say, shall we meet again ?”

“Please God !” said Francis, fervently.

“Let us, then,” said Sir Edward, “appoint a time and rendezvous, and we shall meet again, without doubt. And who knows that, by remaining here, I may not be of greater service to you than by accompanying you to England ? You say that in six months you will return to the New World, and carry fire and sword among the Spaniards. This is the 3rd of April, 1564 ; I will meet you again on the 3rd of February, 1565.”

“Where shall the rendezvous be ?”

“Let it be the island of Trinidad, which, although belonging to the Spaniards, is almost abandoned by them. It will be easy for us to meet there without attracting their attention, while they would hardly suffer you to bring an armed ship into any of the ports of New Granada.”

“So be it,” said Francis, once more pressing his hand. “See ! the anchor is a-weigh. The ship’s boat shall take you ashore, and God speed you, my kind friend !”

“But you have forgotten one thing,” said Sir Edward.

“What is that ?”

“Why, your purpose to return with a large, well-armed, well-manned, ship. You forget that this will require money. I have not forgotten it. Here is a letter to the steward of my estate in Cornwall ; it contains an order to provide you with funds to the amount of five thousand pounds. Take it, and may it prosper in your hands !”

“My kind friend,” said Francis, the tears starting to his

eyes at this fresh proof of Sir Edward's regard, "I do not need it."

"How so?—how will you purchase and equip your vessel of war?"

"There is a man in England who will gladly join me, and furnish the funds. His name is John Hawkins, and people call him Sir John Hawkins, though I know not why."

"I have heard of him. He is a slaver, and bears the character of a desperate and reckless adventurer."

"No matter," said Francis; "he is, I know, a brave man. The war which I am about to declare against the Spaniards shall be no little war; it shall be a war of extermination, and in time shall assume gigantic proportions—in time it will become a national war. The day will come when our great and glorious Queen shall approve and encourage the acts of Francis Drake, the Corsair of the Main. In the meantime, it is necessary that I find a countryman to aid me with his mind and fortune in avenging the insult offered to our common country, England, in my person. John Hawkins, the slaver, will be that man. He will join me, because, although he loves gold, he loves still better danger and glory. Thus it will happen that John Hawkins will renounce the wretched traffic in slaves, and will join me in ruining the power of the enemies of England."

"Be it as you say, Francis," replied Sir Edward; "nevertheless, take the letter, and deliver it to my steward. It is my wish also to venture in this enterprise with you. Obtain what aid you can from John Hawkins; if he is willing to venture enough to arm a sloop or a brig, take my five thousand pounds, and, placing it with him, you can then arm and equip a frigate, of which I shall be part owner."

Sir Edward would take no denial, so Francis was forced to accept the letter, promising to use the money in the way Sir Edward prescribed.

And now the anchor is up, and the crew are busy setting the sails of the brig. Sir Edward, bidding adieu to Francis, his brothers, Amy, and the sailors, descends into the boat, and, accompanied by the faithful Gideon, is rapidly rowed ashore. Then the boat returned to the ship, and in a few minutes her white sails were spread to the breeze, and she plunges through the waves once again, bound to Old England.

For some moments the Englishman and his servant stood on the quay, gazing on the vessel which was fast bearing their friends far away across the broad blue ocean. Sir Edward took off his hat, and waved it aloft as a farewell. The morning was just beginning to break, and through the grey dawn he could just discern the figure of Francis on the taffrail. He saw him wave his hat in reply, and then, turning towards the house of Don José, clench his fist, and shake it threateningly. Well Sir Edward knew the meaning of the gesture; well he knew that at that moment the young Captain was registering a solemn vow of a terrible vengeance!

CHAPTER XX.

THE MAN WHO LEAPED FROM THE WINDOW.

SIR EDWARD DUDLEY and Gideon Glossop remained watching the *Enterprise*, as she sailed away from Santa Marta in the grey of the morning.

"And where are we going now, master?" asked the

latter, in doleful accents, as they turned away from the sea. "Yonder go our friends, in the little brig on board which we have spent so many happy hours. A pest on it! it almost seems that we only make friends to bid them adieu. I wonder," he added, casting a last look back towards the receding brig, "whether we shall ever see them again!"

Sir Edward made no answer, but walked on towards the town in silence. It was now broad daylight, and the sun had begun to gild the tops of the distant mountains; still, however, the inhabitants of Santa Marta were buried in sleep. From time immemorial the Spaniards have been renowned for their slothful habits, and they had no intention in the New World, more than in the Old, of belying their reputation.

Leaving the house of Don Placido on their right, master and servant turned up the principal street of the town. This was broad, and the buildings tolerably handsome; but the utter solitude gave it an appearance of sadness and gloom not calculated to raise the spirits. Sir Edward, followed by Gideon, sauntered slowly on, gazing about him with the air of a man who has nothing better to do. Suddenly his attention was arrested by the sound of cries and shouts, which appeared to come from a house close by.

"Hark, Gideon!" he said, "what are those cries? There seems to be a fight going on."

Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, when a man bounded from an open window immediately before them, and alighted at their feet.

"By my faith," said Gideon, with a great horse-laugh, "but these people in Santa Marta have a curious fashion of coming out of their houses!"

On hearing Gideon speak, the man who had alighted at the feet of Sir Edward, cried joyfully—

"Ah! you are Englishmen, gentlemen, by your speech, I think?"

"Yes, sir," replied Sir Edward, secretly pleased to find a countryman, or, at all events, to hear his native tongue in this foreign land; "we are English."

"Ah!" then I am saved!" cried the other.

Then, saluting Sir Edward, he said, in English—

"Sir, my name is the Baron Aloysius de Morny. I am a native of Gascony, in France; and at the present time I am pursued by men who seek my life."

Scarcely had the Baron de Morny of Gascony said these words, when the door of the house was thrown open, and three men rushed forth, swords in hand. These three men suddenly stopped when they perceived that their intended prey stood by the side of two others. Then one of them, who appeared to be the master of the others, advanced, and said in Spanish, addressing Sir Edward—

"Senor, my name is Don Martinez de la Torre. I have just surprised this *caballero* in the chamber of my wife. Deliver him to me for vengeance."

"Senor," replied Sir Edward, drawing his sword, in which Gideon followed his example, "whether you have found this gentleman in the chamber of your wife or not, is nothing to do with me. That with which I have to do is this—that he has demanded my aid, and that he is alone and unarmed, while you are three, and armed. Therefore, not only do I refuse to deliver him to you, but I declare that I will defend him with my sword."

"Ah!" shouted Don Martinez; "is it so? Good! Come on, men; down with them all three!—death to the traitors!"

But if the desire to punish the insult to his conjugal dignity prompted Don Martinez to attack Sir Edward and

Gideon, it did not so operate on his followers, who remained deaf to his shouts for them to come on. These, while their master advanced threateningly, retired, and retired so well, that they vanished altogether.

A cry of rage broke from Don Martinez, when he found that he had been deserted by his faithless followers. For one moment he seemed, notwithstanding the disgraceful defection of his men, to be about to attack the two defenders of his unarmed foe; but caution is contagious, like temerity.

Retiring, in his turn, after a moment's reflection, the hidalgo regained the threshold of his door; and threatening, although he dared not strike, he said—

“Very good, Baron de Morny; you escape me to-day, but another time I will find and kill you.”

“I doubt it much,” replied the Gascon, mockingly, “In any case, when you do meet me again, I shall have a sword also; and perhaps it is yourself who may be killed. I warrant me, Senor Martinez, that you will not find the task so easy as you think.”

This episode—more comic than terrible, certainly—took place in less time than it has taken us to relate it. In the meantime, at the sound of the loud and threatening accents of Don Martinez, many windows were thrown open in the neighbourhood, and heads protruded. The Baron de Morny passed his arm familiarly through that of Sir Edward, and said—

“Come, sir, this is not the place for me to thank you for your assistance. Come—I know where we can converse at our ease.”

“Converse!” thought Sir Edward; “I have no wish to converse!”

Nevertheless, urged on by the same unaccountable im-

pulse which he had oftentimes felt before, he resolved to accompany his new-found friend. Why he did so, he could not say ; but he felt convinced that by so doing he should conduce to the attainment of his object.

Taking first one turning, then another, and then again another, and dodging about like a hunted hare, the Gascon at last led our adventurers to a quiet little *locanda*, or inn, the landlord of which was just taking down the shutters.

"It is not a very grand place," he said, entering ; "but they sell very good Muscatel wine, and it is not likely that Don Martinez will find us out here."

"A pest on Don Martinez!" said Sir Edward, testily. "What care I if he does find us out? If he be wise, he will not attempt it ; for assuredly I will pass my sword through his body if he annoys me."

"There, my friend," said the Gascon, "do not be annoyed. No one fears Don Martinez, though he is a perfect tiger ; but it is better always to avoid a brawl, if possible."

Sir Edward smiled slightly, and, seating himself, called for wine, and looked more attentively at his new companion. The Baron Aloysius de Morny was a man of about thirty years of age, beneath the middle height, and slender. The expression of his countenance in its normal state—that is to say, when not alarmed—was decidedly pleasing and good-tempered. Altogether, a physiognomist would have pronounced the Baron to be a good-natured, easy sort of person, not gifted with over-much courage or determination. Once inside the *locanda*, the Baron's features resumed their wonted expression of self-satisfied good nature. Casting a sly glance on Sir Edward and his servant, the Gascon thought he saw something of their thoughts in their faces, and coloured slightly.

"*Pardieu!*" he said, with that magnificent bounce which a Gascon sometimes loses, but always recovers—" *pardieu!* I think, gentlemen, that you must acknowledge that in this affair I have behaved as a man of courage?"

"Oh, certainly," said Sir Edward, endeavouring to look serious. "My dear Baron, no one doubts it for a moment."

"I only mentioned it," said the latter, somewhat reassured, "because, when I saw you, one might have thought I was running away."

"Well, certainly," replied Sir Edward, this time unable to refrain from a smile, "it was open to that construction; for certainly you came forth from that open window hurriedly enough."

"Ah! well, my dear sir, you must consider the circumstances ——"

"Yes, of course; you were unarmed, and you had three men with swords against you. Now, had you been armed, it would have been different ——"

"Ah, yes, of course. If I had only possessed a dagger or stiletto, or even a bodkin, I should have stood my ground, and have fought to the death."

"Doubtless, my friend; I can well imagine that, if you had the opportunity, you would fight valiantly. Of that we were well assured, or we should not have undertaken your defence."

The Gascon bowed graciously to Sir Edward, as if he had but received his just meed of praise, and said—

"Thank you, gentlemen; I see you know a brave man when you see one, despite of unfavourable circumstances. You know my name; may I request the honour of yours?"

"I am an Englishman, and my name is Sir Edward

Dudley. This man is my very faithful servant, and his name is Gideon Glossop."

The Gascon bowed, and filling the glasses on the table, said —

"Here is to your health, Sir Edward, and to you. & Master Gideon."

"To your health, sir," said Sir Edward, also taking a glass.

Gideon, nothing loth, followed his master's example.

"And now, sir," said Sir Edward, "may I ask without indiscretion what has brought you three thousand miles away from your native Gascony to a country where, doubtless, the women are handsome enough, but where the men are so ridiculously jealous—as Don Martinez, for example?"

The Baron de Morny passed his hand complaisantly through his hair, about which he was considerably vain, and replied—

"My dear Sir Edward, in answering your question, I shall have to relate to you quite a little romance; and, since you wish it, if you will give me your ears, I will do so."

"Proceed, then," said the other; "we are all attention."

"Master Gideon," said the Gascon, "will you have the goodness to close that door? For although the people here, as a rule, understand neither English nor French, it as well to be cautious."

Gideon did as requested; then the Gascon, having first replenished his glass, proceeded with his history.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE STORY OF THE MAN WHO LEAPED FROM THE WINDOW.

"I WAS four-and-twenty years of age when the death of my father left me in sole possession of one of the finest fortunes in Gascony. I was fond of pleasure—of pleasure of every kind. I liked women, horses, wine, good living, and play—especially women and play ; these have always been my weaknesses.

"I lived and enjoyed myself at such a rate, that in five years things had come to such a pass, that one day, on asking my steward, as usual for money, he replied coolly, not only that my coffers were empty, but also, that having sold or mortgaged all my lands, parks, woods, chateaux, and every other kind of property, there was only one course open to me to prevent me absolutely from starving, and that was, to engage as a soldier in the service of our good King Charles V. of France.

"A soldier ! I, a gentleman and a Baron, to serve as a common soldier—preposterous ! I kicked the fellow out, and hastened to a friend of mine, who had frequently borrowed of me. His name was the Chevalier Madroy. Unfortunately, the Chevalier was in as bad a plight as myself ; he had the very night before lost his last crown at the gaming-table. Then I tried several other friends, but with the same ill-success.

"I discovered, on looking into my affairs, that out of all my fortune there remained only a small house and farm at Cape Breton, at some few leagues from the town of Dax. The annual value of this little property was about eighty or ninety pounds English ; and yet this was all I

had—I, who had been in the habit of spending more than that each week !

“ Well, sir, my friend Madroy and I went down to this place, and, after realizing what money we could, settled there, and passed our time as best we could on the very limited means at my disposal. One day, another friend of mine—a charming fellow, who had but one fault, which consisted in his being as poor as Job—presented himself before us.

“ ‘My friends,’ he said, ‘ I come to bid you adieu for ever.’

“ ‘To bid us adieu for ever ! Where, then, do you propose going ?’

“ ‘To Spain, and from thence to the New World. A brave Castilian, Don Lopez de Badillo, second lieutenant on board the Spanish galleon the *Santissima Trinidad*, has invited me to accompany him, and share his cabin. America is a new country ; there I shall proceed. I may make my fortune ; in any case, I cannot be worse off than I am at present. Adieu, then, my friends ; if I make my million francs over there, I will not forget to lend you some on my return.’ ”

On hearing the name of the vessel mentioned—the *Santissima Trinidad*, the same which Don José de Castanares commanded—Sir Edward started, and listened with renewed attention. The Baron de Morny proceeded—

“ The sudden news of the intended departure of our friend, who was named Constantine de Brissac, impressed me greatly. In the embarrassing position in which I was I received it as an inspiration, and said to myself, ‘ Why should not I go also, and seek my fortune in this new country !’

“‘You think, then,’ I said to De Brissac, ‘that it is possible to make one’s fortune in South America?’”

“‘Why not? The Spaniards have returned loaded with gold and silver, since they have had control over the New World——’

“‘The Spaniards,’ I replied; ‘yes—but we are not Spaniards, and they forbid other nations to share the plunder with them.’

“‘Ah—bah! what matter?’ he replied, impatiently. ‘Don Lopez has told me that it is forbidden to foreigners to trade with the natives; but I have yet to learn that it is forbidden for us or any others to search out for ourselves new and undiscovered lands, and perhaps to find gold and silver-mines richer than any yet known.’

“This mention of gold and silver mines decided me; I resolved to accompany my friend. Our arrangements were soon made; in ten days later we were all in Cadiz, where we embarked on board the *Santissima Trinidad*, Captain Don José de Castanares; and after a voyage of two months and a half, we arrived safely at Santa Marta—De Brissac, Madroy, myself, and one more, whom hitherto I have not mentioned to you.”

Sir Edward listened with rapt attention to his narrative, especially since the mention of Don José de Castanares’ ship. He felt again the same singular presentiment which had so often troubled him before.

“And the name of that other companion?” he asked, eagerly.

“His name was William Warner; he was an Englishman—a countryman of your own.”

The Baron de Morny refreshed himself from the wine-flask, and continued—

“Ah! I shall never cease to thank God for the company

of this William Warner ; for what would have become of us in this country, had it not have been for him ? ‘ Who was this William Warner ? ’ you ask. He was a fisherman at Cape Breton. None knew more—that was all he chose to tell ; and to this day I know not who he is, or where he came from. He came to Cape Breton in the year 1559, and remained there, following the calling of a fisherman, till he accompanied us to the New World.”

“Ah!” exclaimed Sir Edward; “in the year 1559, you say, he arrived at Cape Breton?”

“ Yes ; in 1559. He was such an extraordinary man, that none could know him without wishing to know who and what he really was ; for it is quite certain that he is of a far higher station than he pretends to be.”

"In what way was he an extraordinary man?" asked Sir Edward.

“In what way?—in every way. I flatter myself I am a good judge of men, and I perceived at once that this William Warner was no more born a fisherman than you or I, my friend. Not that he was not skilful in his calling—far from it; no one on the coast could manage a boat better or more skilfully than William Warner. Many times has he gone off to vessels in distress, and rescued the crew, when no other would venture. On one occasion he saved me from drowning. He was the friend of all in his neighbourhood. Although he lived plainly, he had money, which he freely used in alleviating the distresses and wants of others. But he had one great peculiarity, and that was, a singular obstinacy of disposition. When once he said ‘no,’ neither heaven nor earth would turn him from his purpose. I never saw him angry, but I believe his anger, if _____ would be unappeasable.”

"Pardon me," said Sir Edward, interrupting him ; "was this William Warner of tall stature ?"

"Yes."

"Well formed ?"

"Yes."

"Dark hair and complexion ?"

"Yes."

"And with blue eyes ?"

"Yes ; dark, and with blue eyes—a somewhat rare thing."

"And have you ever remarked on his left temple the scar of a wound ?"

"Yes, frequently ; it was apparently from a sword-cut. Ah ! Sir Edward, by your close description of this William Warner, you must have known him !"

Giving way to uncontrollable emotion, the Englishman seized the hands of the Gascon in his.

"Sir," he cried, anxiously, "this William Warner, the fisherman of Cape Breton, is with you in this country, is he not ?"

"Yes, without doubt."

"And you know where to find him ?"

"Yes—well."

"And you will conduct me to him ?"

"Nothing would give me greater pleasure."

Sir Edward Dudley appeared overcome with joy at these good tidings. Aloysius de Morny looked with astonishment on the emotion of the Englishman. He knew nothing of the circumstances, so that it was not wonderful that he should be surprised at so simple an affair affecting Sir Edward so deeply. After a time Sir Edward regained his composure, and said to the Gascon—

"Baron, the news you have given me overwhelms me with joy. For five years I have been searching through

the world for his man, this William Warner, to whom you say you will conduct me. Perform your promise, and do so, and you will merit my everlasting gratitude. Continue now your recital, and tell us what befel you, your companions, and William Warner, after your arrival in this country."

The Baron continued his narrative—

"There are some men who, without effort on their own part, inspire us with confidence in them. William Warner was one of these men. From the very first I anticipated that his skill, determination, and energy would be of the greatest service to us. With my companions, De Brassac and Madroy, it was different; but then, they had not an opportunity of knowing him as I had. William Warner, on board the *Santissima Trinidad*, kept himself studiously aloof from every one; he sought no one's society, but passed his time principally in reading, or in pacing up and down the deck. I often spoke to my friends about him, stating my belief in his powers and resources; but they only laughed at me—they could not see of what assistance a Cape Breton fisherman could be to them. But the event proved that I was right.

"Arrived at Santa Marta, after a passage of two months and a half, we betook ourselves to an inn in the town. After resting ourselves, and changing our attire, we descended to a room on the ground-floor, intending to order dinner. In the entrance-hall we were met by William Warner.

"‘Gentlemen,’ he said, in his usual calm, grave voice, ‘while you have been resting, I have been about the town making inquiries as to the country and roads; for I imagine it is not the intention of any among us to remain in Santa Marta.’

“ ‘You have been making inquiries!’ replied De Brissac, ironically. ‘How, in the devil’s name, did you do that, my friend, in a country where they only speak and understand Spanish?’

“ ‘How did I manage that, sir?’ replied Warner, calmly, and looking him in the face; ‘why, I asked them in Spanish.’

“ ‘What! you speak Spanish?’

“ ‘Yes, sir, I speak Spanish, as also French, Italian and English.’

“ ‘Truly,’ replied De Brissac, in a tone of annoyance—for he felt vexed at Warner’s tone of calm superiority—‘I was not aware that the Cape Breton fishermen were professors of languages; and I congratulate myself greatly that our friend De Morny has had sufficient influence to procure us so valuable an acquisition to our party.’

“ William Warner frowned slightly at these ironical words, and replied—

“ ‘Monsieur de Brissac, no one has any influence over me—neither you, the Baron de Morny, or any other person. I have come to America because I chose to come; I have come on board the same ship as yourselves because it happened to be the first ship; I trouble myself about your interests because, for the present, they happen to be identical with mine. In the meantime, I wish to remark, that if your affairs lie in a different direction from mine, go your way, and I will do likewise. If you think you can manage best by yourselves, do so; I leave you without a shade of regret.’

“ This was said with such an air of conscious power and superiority, that all felt—they knew not why—that William Warner was the master-spirit. Conscious of this fact, the little unpleasantness was arranged satisfactorily,

and William Warner proceeded to unfold his plans to us.

“ ‘You want gold, do you not?’ he said. ‘Good ; I will tell you how to obtain it. You expect, I presume, to encounter difficulties, dangers, fatigues, and hardships?’

“ ‘Certainly.’

“ ‘Good ; then, in that case, the best thing to be done is to direct our steps to the mountains of Sierra Nerada, about one hundred miles from this place.’

“ ‘But,’ said Brissac, somewhat doubtingly, ‘are you sure that we should be doing best by journeying to these mountains? The second lieutenant of the *Santissima Trinidad* has often told me that the richest mines of gold and silver are situated in the province of Poparzan.’

“ ‘Don Lopez is right so far ; but perhaps he omitted to tell you that all the mines in that district are occupied and strictly guarded by the Spaniards, who will suffer no foreign interference with their rights. No, gentlemen ; you may depend upon it that you will none of you succeed in filling your purses from those parts of the country which the Spaniards hold. If you wish for gold, you must seek it in new and undiscovered regions, where hitherto the New World conquerors have not obtained a footing.’

“ ‘On my faith,’ said Madroy, gloomily, ‘it really seems to me that we shall have great difficulty in procuring a sufficient quantity of the precious metal to render us rich men.’

“ ‘No matter,’ replied Warner ! ‘the greater the difficulty, the greater the glory. Listen to me : the Captain José de Castanares knew no more than yourselves that I understood Spanish. While seemingly deeply intent on a book, I heard him talking with one of the officers concern-

ing the gold-mines of New Granada. What I heard convinced me that, if we wish for gold, we must seek it among the mountains of the Sierra Nerada. It is true that the country is inhabited by a strange and savage tribe of Indians ; but we must defy their arrows and tomahawks, if we wish for the gold their country contains. We are well armed ; a hundred miles is only a four days' journey : what say you, gentlemen—shall we set out to-morrow morning ?'

"'Yes, yes!' we all cried ; 'let us set out to-morrow morning.'

"'Good ; now let us go to dinner.'

"Accordingly, on the following morning, we set out on our journey. William Warner had provided us with a negro guide who knew the country intimately. The commencement of our journey was highly satisfactory ; it resembled more a pleasure trip than an expedition in search of gold, fraught with difficulty and danger. William Warner marched in front with our guide, while I and my two friends amused ourselves by shooting at the numerous forest birds which swarmed the trees on each side of our path.

"We had already travelled some eighteen or twenty miles into the immense forest ; the shades of evening commenced to close in ; still, however, we pushed on, resolved to make a good day's journey of this our first. Suddenly the negro halted, and, trembling with terror, pointed with his finger into the forest on our right. We cocked and primed our arquebuses, expecting to see a tiger, a serpent, or some other wild animal. William Warner advanced in the direction of the place on which the eyes of the negro were fixed

“‘No, no!’ cried the latter, in trembling accents; ‘no go there, massa. Indian there. If massa go there, Indian jump up and kill!’

“But William Warner, not heeding the cries of the negro, advanced, and, not even drawing his pistol or poniard as a precaution against treachery, discovered an Indian extended on his back, to all appearance dead. He called us, and approaching the fallen savage, we perceived that he had received a terrific blow on the head, apparently from a hatchet or tomahawk. The Cape Breton fisherman knelt by his side, and, after examining his wound, said to us—

“This man is not dead; but he will infallibly die if he be not removed, and his wound attended to. Come, gentlemen, procure two branches of trees, and let us carry him with us to the *pulperia*, our destination for this day.’

“‘No, no!’ cried the negro in terror; ‘no carry Indian. If Indian dead, so much the more good. One less to kill white men.’

“William Warner seized the negro by the ear.

“‘How long will it take us to reach the *pulperia*, you black fool? Do you know your way?’

“‘Yes, senor; in half an hour we can be there—at the *locanda* of Sebastian Girenallo.’

“‘Good; then conduct us there, and hold your tongue!’

“The *pulperias*, doubtless you are aware, Sir Edward,” said the Baron de Morny, “are a species of rude inns, or houses of accommodation for travellers. They are situated for the most part in solitary places, in the midst of the vast plains, or prairies of South America. The occupiers of these are hardy hunters, who do not hesitate to brave the attacks of the Indians, in order to increase their store of gold and silver by selling to travellers going and return-

ing to the interior provisions, spirits, and other necessities.

“Girenallo, the proprietor of the *pulperia* in question, had strongly fortified his lonely habitation by means of log barricades, and loopholing the walls. At the present time, however, he had taken other means of security against hostile attacks. He had concluded a treaty, by which he agreed to pay the neighbouring tribes a monthly tribute of cloth, beads, tomahawks, and spirits.

“Arrived at the *pulperia*, we were received gladly by the brave proprietor. On seeing the wounded Indian whom we carried, Sebastian Girenallo, unlike the negro, congratulated us on our good fortune. We had told the proprietor of the place that we were simply travellers, who wished to view the interior of the country.

“‘If that is the case,’ he said, as he motioned for us to enter, ‘nothing could have been more fortunate than this meeting with the wounded Indian warrior. He will owe his life to you ; and a project which otherwise would have been fraught with danger, if not impossible, is thereby rendered easy.’

“How so ?” inquired William Warner.

“‘This wounded red-skin, answered Sebastian, ‘is the Falling Rain, one of the most powerful chiefs of the tribe of Salhanas. The Salhanas are at peace with the Spaniards at present, so that my hut is in no danger from the Falling Rain or his warriors. It is an Ottomanko Indian, the enemies of the Salhanas, who has fallen upon him unawares and thus wounded him, I doubt not.’

“The words of Girenallo proved to be true ; for shortly the Indian returned to consciousness, and learning that we had found him lying wounded, and had carried him to a place of safety, his gratitude knew no bounds. His wound

was more painful than dangerous, and on the following morning he was able to walk as well as ourselves. After again and again expressing his gratitude in the manner of his tribe, he offered himself to be our guide, and conduct us to any part of the country we chose. We resolved to accept his offer, and dismissing the negro, we set out with our new guide. Once on the road, William Warner no longer concealed our destination, but owned that we were bound to the Sierra Nevada mountains, and that we were in search of gold. The Indian listened gravely, and, after a long pause, said—

“The white men found the red-skin warrior alone and wounded by the roadside. They might have killed him, and taken his scalp; but they did not do so. They brought him with them, and treated him as a brother; the Falling Rain is grateful. The white men wish for gold; they need not go so far as the mountains to find it. On the borders of the great stream, the Magdalena, are the hunting-grounds of the Salhanas; there is gold, and more gold than in all the mines of the Spaniards. My warriors and I know of it, and that which they have concealed from all they will open to you; for you are our brothers, and the wigwams of the Salhanas are always open to you. The white men shall have buffalo and deer meat to feed them, wigwams to shelter them, the Salhana warriors to protect them, and the Salhana women to attend on them. Then, when they have found enough of the yellow powder to satisfy them, they shall have horses to take it down to the sea.’

“You may imagine, my dear Sir Edward, that we accepted the offer of the redskin only too gladly; and on the second day found ourselves at the encampment of the Salhanas. But what say you if we breakfast before I

finish my adventures? You say you wish to accompany me back to where I left my friends and William Warner; we will, if you please, start immediately after we have refreshed ourselves; then I can tell you all the rest as we march on towards Sebastian Girenallo's, which will be our first day's journey."

"And what is the distance from thence to the Indian encampment?"

"About five-and-twenty miles."

"Ah! then we can easily arrive at the Indian village by to-morrow night; is it not so, Baron?"

"Assuredly; we might even reach there to-night, had we horses. But, alas! I have lost mine, and there are none to be hired at Santa Marta."

Breakfast was now brought, and placed on the table. While doing justice to this, Sir Edward Dudley, who could not restrain his impatience, said—

"How have you lost your horse; and why can we not hire horses in this place?"

"Ah!" said the Baron, dolorously, "you ask me how I have lost my horse, and why we cannot hire horses here; I will answer your first question first. My horse—a beautiful little mustang, a present from the Bounding Panther, one of my Indian friends—is at the present moment in the stable of Don Martinez."

"Why, it seems, then, that you have not only lost your sword through your gallantry, but also your horse," said Sir Edward, laughing. "Indeed, Baron, in addition to these ruinous losses, you were also in danger of losing your life by the sword of Don Martinez. Truly, if your success in gold-finding is not better than your success in love, your toil is ill-rewarded."

"Ah! Sir Edward, it is no laughing matter. Nor could

this misfortune have been well avoided; for how could I or Donna Florida imagine that Don Martinez would return from Carthagena two days earlier than expected?"

"And now for my second question: why cannot we procure horses here in Santa Marta?"

"Why, my dear friend," replied De Morny, "simply because, in travelling to the camp of the Salhanas, we shall have to pass through the lands of a hostile tribe of Indians; and the proprietors of horses in Santa Marta are of opinion that, if the Indians attack and kill us, they will not have the politeness to bring back the hired horses. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly; so now let us finish our repast, refresh ourselves with one flagon of wine, and then start on our journey, for I am all impatience."

CHAPTER XXII

THE JOURNEY TO THE GOLD-MINES.

IN an hour's time Sir Edward, the Baron de Morny, and Gideon, were on the road through the forest which led to the *pulperia* of Sebastian Girenallo. Sir Edward, still eager for information, commenced the conversation as soon as they were clear of the town.

"Do you know this road well, Baron?"

"Oh yes—very well."

"I suppose, then, you travel this way often?"

"Oh, assuredly; never less than once a month."

"Do you travel it alone?"

"Nearly always."

"But I thought you said that travellers, except when

in numbers, and well armed, were frequently attacked by the Indians?"

"Assuredly; the Ottomankos, and other hostile tribes, frequently attack white travellers."

"And do not the dangers of the road alarm you?"

"Ah! bah!—no. Besides, what is the use? I know well that it is imprudent, for my friends at the Indian encampment always tell me so, and try to dissuade me. But what is to be done? When I have passed twenty-eight days or so at the Indian village, with no amusement but finding gold, and only De Brissac, Madroy, William Warner, and the red-skins to speak to, I get wearied, and long for some life—some pleasure. Sir Edward, I like wine and jollity; and, most of all, I love woman's charming society. What wonder, then, that I should brave the perils of the road, for the sake of Donna Florinda de la Torre? Ah, sir! if you but saw her, you would not wonder. Such a sweet figure, and large dark eyes—the grace of a queen in every movement!"

Sir Edward listened with surprise to this strange man, who fled in terror at the sight of Don Martinez with his drawn sword, and yet did not hesitate to risk his life alone in the forest to gratify his amorous propensities. At the request of Sir Edward, the Gascon now continued his recital.

"I left off," he said—"did I not?—at the point where we were about setting out for the village of the Salhanas with the Indian whom William Warner so opportunely succoured. The Falling Rain is a great chief, undoubtedly. No sooner had we arrived at the village, than he gave us his own wigwam; the women of the tribe hastened to attend to us, bringing us meat, fruit, and drink. Then, the next day, the Falling Rain, with some other warriors,

conducted us to where the gold was to be found. Oh! they nobly kept their word, I promise you. All along the borders of a little stream which coursed through a beautiful valley, we saw the ground shining with the bright yellow gold. On the first day we gathered several pounds weight, the Indians looking on with stolid indifference, but not offering to take any of the precious metal. During six months De Brissac, Madroy, and I went day after day to the golden valley, and returned each night with abundance of gold. I assure you, Sir Edward, that the gold was in such abundance, that we disdained to pick up pieces which were not at least as large as coffee-berries. Strange to say, William Warner, the Cape Breton fishman, did not accompany us on these expeditions. The Indians also noticed it, and questioned us on the subject; but we could give them no other information than what we ourselves obtained from our strange companion. His answer to all questions was—

“‘I do not go for gold, because I do not want gold, is not that a sufficient reason?’

“But the fisherman lost nothing by this; for, after the first two or three days, two of the Indians accompanied us, and joined in our search for the yellow metal. Their eyes were quicker, and their activity greater than ours, so that each day they took home nearly double as much as we did. At first we thought that this was for themselves; but we were deceived, for we soon found out that each night they carried the gold they had collected to William Warner, and insisted on his taking it. Thus it happens, that at the present time the Cape Breton fisherman has more than three times as much gold as any of us, and each of us has more than a horse can carry.”

Sir Edward looked somewhat incredulous at this.

“What! do you mean to say that you have **more** gold than a horse can bear on its back?”

“Assuredly I do; and no three horses could bear the heap of treasure which William Warner possesses.”

“And this William Warner—what does he do?—how does he pass his time?—what does he purpose doing?”

“What does he do? Why, while we go in search of gold, he goes with the Indians on their hunting parties, and even on the war-trail. He knows medicine, and cures the sick; he also teaches the young children, and such of the warriors as are willing to learn. I assure you that these red-skins look on him, not as a man, but as a demi-god; they worship him, and would shed their blood to the last drop in his defence. They never take any important step without first consulting him; he is looked upon as infallible in all things, and I very much doubt if they would even allow us to leave, were he to refuse his consent; for, on one occasion, when I wished to come into Santa Marta, to enjoy myself, and spend some of the piles of gold I had gathered, he declared that it was not safe, that several war-parties of the Ottomanko Indians were in the neighbourhood. I laughed at him, and set out to go. I saw him speak to some of the chiefs, and ere I had advanced a hundred yards, several of them appeared before me in the path, and barred my way. I turned, thinking to leave the village by another road; but the same thing happened as before.”

“And do you not know, then, what he thinks of doing?” asked Sir Edward.”

“When we inquire, and press him to know when he means to leave the village, he replies—

“Never; I like the Indians, and they like me; why, then, should I go, and leave these red men, whose love for

me is true and constant, for the faithless friendship, falsehood, and treachery of white men ?'

"When we tell him that we have amassed sufficient gold, and we wish to leave with it, he says only—

"‘It is not yet time.’

"Once I and Madroy declared that we would go.

"‘Go,’ he replied, ‘and see how far in the forest you will travel unmolested. Besides, even if you reached Santa Marta in safety, do you imagine that the Spanish authorities would let you leave with your treasure? No, my friends; it would be confiscated to the use of King Philip II. of Spain.’”

"But does he never mean to leave this country?" asked Sir Edward; "and does he never mean you to leave either?"

"As to himself, we know nothing; as to us, he tells us to go on gathering gold; that he will show us some day how we may leave with our treasure, but that the time is not yet come. And so we are forced to wait, for without him we can do nothing."

"Baron," said Sir Edward, you are about to conduct me to the presence of this William Warner, whom you talk so much about, are you not?"

"Assuredly; I have said so before."

"Such being the case, you will be entitled to some reward. You are anxious to return to France, are you not?"

"Anxious? I am mad! I burn with desire once more to return—once more to be the great lord I was; to be yet richer than before; to be able to laugh to scorn those who, in my adversity, laughed at me!"

"Well, Baron, what will you say if I provide you with the means of so doing?"

"What will I say? Why, I will say that I am eternally grateful—that you are the best and noblest man that ever breathed!"

"Well, Baron, if you perform your promise, I will provide you with the means of returning to France."

"And take my treasure with me?"

"Yes."

The Baron de Morny appeared transported with joy.

"Is it possible?" he cried; "and you will really do this?"

"Assuredly; the same vessel which brought me to America shall, if you please, take you back."

"Ah! I understand—you came to America in a ship."

"Well," said Sir Edward, laughing, "you don't suppose, do you, that I walked here? Yes, I came in a ship—in an English ship."

"And this ship will take me and my friends, and our treasure, back to Europe?"

"Yes, assuredly—when it returns."

"How, when it returns? I do not understand."

"It is very simple, for the vessel in which I came sailed again this morning."

"Gone! and where?"

"To England."

The Baron looked deeply disappointed.

"Gone," he said, and without you? Ah! you are joking!"

"No, I am not joking. The vessel has gone, and it has gone without me, because I intend to remain here."

"And why do you remain here?"

"Because I wish to see this William Warner, of whom you talk so much."

"You knew, then, before seeing me, that he was in this country?"

"I learned it yesterday."

"But the ship—the English ship, it she has sailed, how can she take me and my friends back to Europe?"

"She will return."

"Ah! I see; and when?"

"In six months."

"You are sure it will return in six months?"

"As sure as I now see you before me," said Sir Edward, smiling at his eagerness.

"Six months!" said the Gascon, with a deep sigh; "six months more among the red-skins! Well, well—I suppose I must endure it."

They arrived without misadventure at the *pulperia* before evening; for Sir Edward strode on at a rapid pace, and his companions were forced to keep up with him. The Englishman wished to hire horses of the proprietor, and to ride on at once to the Indian village, distant about thirty-five miles; but nothing could induce the Gascon to move. He declared that he was hungry, thirsty, and tired; so—though very unwillingly—Sir Edward determined to remain there for the night.

Sir Edward was awake and up early in the morning, and did not fail to arouse the sleeping Gascon, who would willingly have slept for some hours more. However, on being told that the breakfast was prepared, and that the horses were waiting outside, he rose, and hastened into the room where the morning meal was laid out. He did not fail to do justice to the forest fare, and had scarcely finished, when Sir Edward rose, saying—

"Come, let us pay the reckoning, and start on our journey."

"It seems to me," said the Baron, "that you are in a great hurry, my friend. Are all Englishmen as impetuous as you? Here have I barely finished my meal, when you are red-hot to be on the road. As to what you say of paying, I hope you do not imagine that I should allow you to pay any part, while I have such heaps of treasure which, alas! I have no opportunity of enjoying."

"Oh! as you please; since you are so anxious to pay all, you are quite welcome to do so, for my part."

Accordingly, the Baron paid the score, and they mounted the horses, which were in waiting for them outside.

"When shall I send back the horses?" asked the Gascon, whom the proprietor of the *pulperia* knew well from his frequent journeys up and down to Santa Marta.

"Not for two or three days," was the reply.

"And why not?"

"Because to-morrow and the next day I expect some of the Ottamanko Indians will be in the neighbourhood; and if they meet the Salhana warriors with my horses, they may kill both warriors and horses together."

"Come," said Sir Edward, impatiently, "let us push on."

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE OASIS IN THE DESERT.

THE *llanos* of South America are vast plains, sometimes covered with luxuriant verdure, sometimes but fields of shifting sand. They answer to the *pampas*, which are found still further south, and the savannahs and prairies of

North America. At the present day, the *llanos* serve for the rearing and feeding of numberless flocks and herds, attended by shepherds called *llaneros*. At the date of this tale, the *llanos* were but vast arid deserts, peopled only by Indians, wolves, and panthers. Woe to the unfortunate traveller who ventures to leave the buffalo-tracks, or the rude roads roughly cut through the desert! Lost in these immense and trackless wilds, his doom is a dreadful one; for he will surely perish from hunger, fatigue, and thirst.

The horses of Sebastian Girenallo were good ones, and bore our travellers on at a rapid rate. After an hour's ride, however, they left the soft, springy turf on which they had been hitherto travelling, and entered on a vast sandy plain. Their horses sank at every step up to the fetlocks, so that their progress was now necessarily slow.

"This is weary work, Baron," said the Englishman, as they plodded slowly on. "Have we much more of this detestable sand to wade through?"

"No, fortunately. You see that dark spot at about a mile distant?"

"Yes—I perceive it."

"Well, that is an oasis. We will rest there for an hour during the heat of the day, and then push on again; half-an-hour's ride will then bring us again into the forest, and we can then make good the delay which the heavy sand has caused us."

They arrived at the welcome resting-place in a few minutes more, and dismounting from their horses, were glad to seek repose and shelter from the burning rays of the midday sun under the spreading branches of the *abanijo* trees, which here cast their welcome shade.

After a rest of half an hour, which both Gideon and De Morny would gladly have seen prolonged, Sir Edward gave the signal to depart. Gideon and the Gascon rose reluctantly from the ground, where they had thrown themselves, and prepared again to mount their horses.

The oasis was about a quarter of a mile across. In addition to the large trees, whose welcome shade our travellers found so pleasant, there was abundant growth of brushwood, which it would have been extremely difficult to penetrate, had not a rough path been cleared by the passage of wild cattle and travellers through its centre. The path, such as it was, though narrow and tortuous, was sufficiently good for them to make their way through without going forth into the sandy plain, and making their way round the little island in the desert.

Sir Edward Dudley mounted his horse, and urged him ahead as fast as the nature of the road would permit. He had arrived at about the centre of the oasis, and was looking out for the open space on the other side, when suddenly, without warning, a figure darted from the thick obscurity of the brushwood, and stood right before him in the path. The horse stopped instantly, and reared up in alarm. The figure was that of an Indian, and Sir Edward recognized at once his enemy of the day before — the Creeping Snake. The Englishman instantly drew a pistol from his belt, for, remembering the affair of the day before, he liked not this second appearance of the savage in his path.

Gideon and De Morny, seeing their leader stop so suddenly, urged on their horses to see the cause. Gideon gave a cry of astonishment, for he recognized the red-skin as well as his master. He, however, felt no alarm; for

ne reasoned justly—if six of them failed so signally in an attack on three but the day before, surely one would have no chance against the same number.

Meanwhile the Indian, without the slightest appearance of inquietude at the pistol which Sir Edward held ready cocked in his hand, or at the other two pale-faces who had come up, stood his ground, looking Sir Edward in the face with a smile of insolent mockery.

“Ah!” growled Gideon, “it is that ugly dog of an Indian that you would not let me throttle yesterday, master. Let me now complete my work ; for it seems that he has not yet learnt wisdom, but means to dispute our way.”

Sir Edward made a sign for his servant to be silent. The Indian still stood with folded arms right in the path of the white men.

“What does my red brother want ?” asked Sir Edward, in Spanish. “I thought we proved sufficiently yesterday that it was a dangerous thing to interfere with the pale-face warriors. Why, then, does the red-skin again stand in my path ?”

The Indian, not moving an inch from his position, replied calmly—

“It is true that my brother the white warrior is strong—I have not forgotten it ; but is it a reason, because the pale-faces yesterday killed five of my warriors, that to-day I should be forbidden to walk abroad in the prairie, which the Great Spirit has given to the red man for a dwelling-place ?”

“Assuredly not,” replied the other. “My brother has a right to walk where he pleases ; but he has no right to stand in my path, or to prevent my doing the same. I

have no time to stay here talking, so stand on one side, and let me pass."

These words were said firmly, but without rudeness; still the red-skin did not move.

"Is it permitted for the Ottamanko warrior to ask where the pale-faces are going?" he said, in the same tone of ironical composure.

Sir Edward looked at the Indian, as if seeking to divine his reason for asking such a question.

"We are going to the village of the Salhanas," he replied, at last, unable to read anything in the stolid countenance of the savage. "Are the Ottamankos at war with the Salhanas?"

"No."

"Then perhaps the Creeping Snake wishes to send a message to the Salhana village? If it be so, let him speak; I will safely deliver it. Is it so?"

"Perhaps," said the Indian, with the same imperturbable gravity.

The Indian retired slightly, as if to give passage to the white men; but at the instant, when Sir Edward, shaking his horse's bridle, was about to pass on, he suddenly raised his hand to his mouth, and gave a slight screech like that of an owl. Instantly a number of half-naked savages bounded forth from the brushwood on every side, and threw themselves on the three travellers. There were at least fifty of them; and, even had there have been time, resistance would have been madness.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HOW THE CREEPING SNAKE REVENGED HIMSELF FOR HIS
FORMER DEFEAT.

THE two Englishmen and the Gascon were overpowered at once, and dragged forcibly from their horses. Gideon, indeed, drew his knife at the first attack of the savages ; but his master seeing the act, and knowing its utter folly, shouted to him to desist, and to surrender quietly. Gideon grumblingly complied ; and it was well that he did so, or his life would doubtless have paid the immediate forfeit. As for the Baron de Morny, he made not the slightest attempt at resistance ; for, in the first place, he was unarmed, and in the second, had he been armed to the teeth, he was far too much frightened.

And now the Creeping Snake, in whose villanous countenance there sat an expression of malicious triumph, made a sign to the savages who had seized Sir Edward Dudley. In obedience to that sign, they dragged him before the Ottamanko chief, who surveyed him with a sinister, ironical smile.

“ And now what says the pale-face ? Is not the Creeping Snake a great warrior ? He swore yesterday to avenge his warriors who were slain by the pale-faces, and to-day the pale-faces are his prisoners.”

Sir Edward shrugged his shoulders contemptuously.

“ Yesterday,” he said, “ you were only six to three ; to-day you are fifty to three. If the Creeping Snake takes glory to himself for such a victory, let him do so ; the white warriors would regard it with shame.”

The Ottamanko chief felt the full force of this rebuke, although he did not acknowledge it.

"The pale-faces were wise," he continued, "in not offering to resist ; for, thanks to that prudence, they will have some few hours longer to live."

"We are in your power," said Sir Edward, defiantly ; "do with us as you choose. You can, if you like, murder us treacherously, or let us free ; but, be assured that, if you do kill us, we shall be terribly avenged. Dog of a red-skin ! I defy you—do your worst !"

"Dog of a red-skin ! I defy you—do your worst !" repeated Gideon after his master ; then, in an under-tone, he growled : "and that worst would not be much harm if I had you alone, or two or three of you, you ugly hounds ! But fifty—bah ! it is too many."

The bold demeanour of the two Englishmen provoked a murmur of admiration among the Indians ; even the Creeping Snake himself regarded these men with somewhat of admiration, and with somewhat less of hatred.

"Decidedly," he said, "the white warriors are brave—they know how to die ; the Great Spirit will receive them with honour when they present themselves before him."

Meantime, the poor Baron de Morny resembled all the while a ghost, he was so deathly pale. Looking at him, a thought suddenly struck Sir Edwin Dudley ; he resolved to act upon it.

"Creeping Snake," he said, in a bold, defiant voice, to the red chief, "we are ready—my servant and I—to die ; we scorn to ask our lives of such as you. But if we are to die because we yesterday killed five of your warriors, that is no reason why our companion here should also die, who has never injured any of you. He has never shed a drop of blood of any of your tribe ; why, then, do you keep him prisoner with us ?"

As he spoke, he pointed to the Gascon, who still re-

mained the very picture of terror. The Indian looked with contempt on the white face and trembling limbs of the Baron.

"This man was not with you yesterday ; who is he, then ?"

"He is a friend of the Salhanas," replied Sir Edward.

"The Salhanas are brave warriors," said the Indian ; "they have not cowards for friends. It cannot be."

"Be it so. That pale-face has not, perhaps, a valiant heart ; but, I repeat to you, that for more than a year he has lived in the village of the Salhanas. The Creeping Snake is a great warrior ; he does not crush a bruised flower. He will, then, let the pale-face return to the village of the Salhanas ; and when we die—my companion and I—we will sing the praises of the Ottamanko warriors, who spared the feeble, and struck the strong."

The Creeping Snake could not but do homage in his heart to the bravery of his prisoner, and feel flattered at the same time by this appeal to his generosity. It is possible, also, that he had some secret reason for complying with this request of the white man. Be that as it may, after a minute's reflection, he said—

"The Creeping Snake will grant the wish of the pale-face."

Then, at a gesture from their chief, the Indians who held the Gascon loosed him, and left him free.

"You are free, Baron," said Sir Edward to the Gascon, "I have explained to the Ottamanko chief, in Spanish, that you have never injured any of his tribe, and that you are a friend of the Salhanas."

"Free ?" cried the Gascon, scarcely able to realize the joyful news.

"Yes, you are free ; but you only, for we are still prisoners."

"Ah ! it is you, then, whom they desired to capture. What will they do with you ?"

"Indeed, I do not know ; but what you have to do is to leave this at once, and make all haste to the village of the Salhanas."

"And you——?"

"Well, we will join you as soon as we can. When you arrive at the village of the Salhanas, tell this William Warner that we are prisoners in the hands of the Ottamankos ; say Sir Edward Dudley, and Gideon Glossop, his servant. So now mount your horse, and use all speed."

"But you ?—when shall we see you again ?"

"Have I not told you that we will join you, if we can get away from these savages ?"

"But, if you cannot get away ?—what are they about to do with you ?"

"What is that to you ?" said Sir Edward, not wishing to tell him that they were doomed to death.

"How—what is it to me ?" and the Gaston coloured up at the thought of thus leaving the men who had defended him with their swords but the day before ; for, in spite of all, the Baron, though somewhat timid, had not a bad heart. "Ah !" he cried, "for what do you take me, my friend ? Do you think that I will leave you—will desert you to die alone ? For, although I know but little Spanish, I gather that these savages mean to kill you. No ; decidedly I will not go—I will stay and share your fate."

Sir Edward took the hand of the poor Gascon, and said—

"Baron, you have a brave heart."

"A brave heart—yes," muttered de Morny, "but in a timid body."

"Now listen to me. I appreciate and thank you for your devotion, in wishing to share our fate ; but it cannot be. Our only hope of safety rests in your being able to reach the Salhana village in time. Now haste ; for if you stay, you do but doom us, as well as yourself, to certain death."

The Baron hesitated for another second, and then leaped on his horse.

"So be it, Sir Edward. I go, but I swear that if I thought I could benefit you by staying, I would do so. Adieu ; I will be in the village of the Salhanas in little more than two hours' time. Adieu !"

Then the Baron struck spurs into his horse's flanks, and disappeared from their sight.

CHAPTER XXV.

DOOMED TO DEATH

THE Ottamanko village was situated at the extreme verge of the *llanos*, at a distance of about three miles, and in a direction diametrically opposite to that which our travellers were pursuing when seized by their enemies. Two warriors, mounted on their horses, rode forward to the village, to announce the important capture ; and the prisoners were met outside the village by the whole of the tribe, old women and children. With loud shouts, yells, and taunts, these clustered about Sir Edward and Gideon, even oing so far as to strike and throw stones in their

faces. Arrived at the village, the Creeping Snake was joined by other warriors, whose dignity did not suffer them to accompany the women and children to meet the captives. The chief remained for a few moments in conversation with these, and then made a sign, at which the uproar and chorus of yells ceased, and the women, children, and old men returned to their wigwams, leaving only four warriors to guard the prisoners. Meanwhile, the Creeping Snake seated himself, and the other warriors, following his example, also seated themselves in a circle round him.

"Ah! ah!" said Gideon. "See, master, they are sitting down; they feel fatigued, doubtless, after their great victory—a victory of fifty over two."

"No," said Sir Edward; "they are not fatigued—they are about to hold a council. They are about to bring us to trial and to pronounce sentence on us."

"To bring us to trial!" grumbled Gideon. "Pretty judges, forsooth! Where are their wigs and gowns, the bald-headed savages? A curse on them! I would I had my hands free, and a stout staff—how soon would I knock some of their heads about for them!"

"Silence, Gideon! we are about to be questioned."

The Creeping Snake, seated in the centre of the circle of warriors, had made a sign to their guards to bring forward the prisoners. Then the Creeping Snake, addressing them, said—

"My brothers remember that, on the day before yesterday, they fought with and killed five of the Ottamanko braves."

"The red-skin warrior is right," said Sir Edward, boldly. "Why should I deny it? I and my friends were lost in the forest; we met the Creeping Snake and his braves. We asked them to direct us. They promised to do so, but

instead of keeping good faith, they watched their opportunity, and treacherously attacked us. My brother knows the result. Five of the Ottamanko warriors have gone to the Great Spirit ; and the Creeping Snake himself would have died also, had it not have been for my mercy. Aye, red-skin dog—my mercy ! For the Great Spirit had delivered you into our hands ; but we scorned to destroy an enemy unworthy of brave men.”

A silence succeeded these audacious words. The Indians gazed with anger, not unmingled with wonder and admiration, on the speaker who thus defied and insulted them. Then an old warrior spoke.

“The Ottamanko Indians are at war with the Spaniards,” he said, “therefore it is right that they should attack and slay them on every opportunity.”

“I have before said that we are not Spaniards,” replied Sir Edward, boldly. “We are Englishmen, and have never injured the Ottamankos, nor do we wish so to do ; but the Ottamankos treacherously attacked us—six redskins to three whites ; and the whites, with the aid of the Great Spirit, slew the red men, and made their chief prisoner.”

“So be it,” said the Indian, bowing his head solemnly. “The pale-faces spilled the blood of five Indian warriors —”

“In self-defence,” was the reply. “Does my father, then, think it a crime for us to defend our lives when attacked ? But what need to say more on the subject ? We are your prisoners, my servant and I—we are in your power ; and it is easy, if it so please you, for you to slay us. Let the Ottamanko warriors do as seems them best ; we do not fear them—we defy them to their worst. Only I warn them of this, that if they injure a hair of our

heads. a terrible retribution will fall on them—a vengeance which shall be remembered with fear and trembling by their children's children."

The Indians exchanged glances of surprise.

"Of what terrible vengeance do my brothers speak?" asked one of them.

"I have spoken—it is enough ; let the red-skins do as they please."

"Ah!" said the Creeping Snake, with a grunt, "I know on what the pale-faces count. They know there are some Europeans who have dwelt in the village of the Salhanas for more than twelve moons. The pale-faces think to have their succour ; and if they arrive after they are dead, they think to be avenged by them. It was to go to the village of the Salhanas, and ask their aid, that my brother prayed for the liberty of his companion, whom we have allowed to depart. Who knows?—perhaps the pale-face hopes that even now his white friends and the Salhana Indians are on the war-trail to free him. If the pale-faces think that that can save them, they are mistaken. They have shed the blood of five Indian warriors, and they shall die—they shall die at sunrise to-morrow morning. I have said it."

The Creeping Snake looked round the assemblage of warriors at these words ; each one signified his assent by a grunt and a nod of the head. Sir Edward felt that their doom was sealed ; nevertheless, his heart did not fail him. He replied to the Indian's threat only by a glance of defiance and scorn.

"Master," asked Gideon, "what do they say?"

"They say, my poor Gideon," replied Sir Edward, sadly, "that we are both of us to die at sunrise to-morrow. They know that we have friends in the village of the

Salñanas, and they know that the Baron de Morny has gone to ask their assistance; therefore, knowing this, they will be prepared, and we must expect to die to-morrow."

"To die to-morrow!" muttered Gideon. "Well, master, since we must die, let us kill as many as we can of these vermin, and meet our deaths fighting like men. I can burst my bonds, and seize tomahawks for myself and you. Say the word, and it is done. I will wager that I dash out a few of their brains ere they secure me; and you, Sir Edward, unless your hand has lost its cunning, can give good account of some. What say you, master? Give the word."

Gideon had partly freed his hands, and with one tremendous effort he felt sure he could burst the remaining bonds. To seize a couple of tomahawks from the guards, who were utterly unsuspecting, would have been easy, and doubtless more than one red-skin would bite the dust; but to escape, surrounded as they were by seventy or eighty armed savages, was impossible. Sir Edward shook his head.

"No, Gideon," he said; "let us watch and wait. Some chance may turn up; and if the worst comes to the worst, we can reserve our struggle to the last."

The Creeping Snake said some words to their guards in the Indian tongue; then Gideon and his master were led off to a distance of about a hundred yards, and securely bound to two trees by cords made of a species of grass twisted. They were bound each to a tree, facing each other, at a distance of only a few paces, so that they could easily converse.

Gideon laughed grimly, as the Indians proceeded to bind him with their grass ropes.

"Aha!" he growled out, "bind me tight, you red apes, you—bind me tight, or, by all the saints in the calendar, I'll get away! Master," he added, with a chuckle, "I can break these grass ropes like a piece of whiplcord. You give the word, and I am free. Bah! the fools, to think that such flimsy gear as this would hold me!" And Gideon glanced disdainfully at the bonds with which the Indians secured him.

Sir Edward gave an exclamation of delight. He knew his servant's gigantic strength, but did not imagine that it was sufficient to break the many coils of rope with which they were binding him.

"Gideon, are you sure you can free yourself? For if you can, I have an idea."

"Am I sure? Yes, master—quite sure. If I do not burst every one of these like a piece of packthread, I am willing to forfeit a year's wages."

"My poor Gideon," replied Sir Edward, unable to control a smile, "I fear me much, that if you try, and fail, you will never need either wages, clothes, or food again."

"Pest! master, you are right; I had forgotten that. No matter—I can do it."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE RESCUE.

THE two prisoners remained quiet until night closed around them. Four Indians stood, one on each side of the captives, to guard against even the chance of escape. Sir Edward Dudley remained plunged in thought; he was

revolving a plan of escape. Gideon passed the time away whistling, grumbling to himself, and swearing at the Indians, who understood not a word.

"Ah! you red thieves," he muttered; "just wait awhile, till my master gives the word. See how I will crack your bald heads for you!"

It was now long past midnight; Sir Edward guessed it to be about two o'clock in the morning. The sun rose at four, and then they were to die. Vainly and anxiously he watched and listened for any sign of the approach of rescue; no sound broke the stillness of the forest.

The four sentinels stood statue-like by their side. Already in the east he could discover the first faint signs of the coming day.

Another half-hour passed on, and the prisoners could discern signs of life and motion in the Indian village. First the women might be seen moving about, then fires were lighted one by one, and then the warriors began to issue from their wigwams. In another half-hour it is broad daylight, and the Creeping Snake himself issues from his wigwam, and joins a group of warriors who are evidently awaiting him.

Sir Edward Dudley saw that the time had come to do or die. Already he could see a party of savages busy erecting a stake in the centre of the camp. To that stake they were to be bound, and there they would meet their death.

"Gideon!" said Sir Edward, in a low voice.

"Yes, master."

"Are you sure you can do as you said?"

"Give but the word, and it is done," was the reply.

"Well, now listen to me."

"Master, I am all attention."

"You must pretend that the cords hurt you—do you understand?"

"Pretend that the cords hurt me! Pest, master! there is no need for pretence. My curses on them—they cut right into my flesh!"

"Well, you must cry out."

"Cry out? Oh, yes—assuredly I will cry out, if you wish it; but what is the good?"

"Listen, and I will explain. You must cry out, and beg of them to come and loosen your bonds. Do you see?"

"Yes, master."

"Perhaps they will do so, perhaps they will not; at all events, it is probable that they will approach to examine the cause of your outcry."

"Ah! yes—I begin to see. They will come near me."

"And then," said Sir Edward, "you will burst your bonds, throw yourself upon them, seize their tomahawks, and, if possible, free me; for my strength is not like yours, Gideon. If you are unable to do so, however, make your own escape as best you can."

"What, and leave you here, master? Not if I know it!"

"Well, well, good Gideon—you are a true and faithful fellow. Do the best you can; and God have mercy on us, for we are, indeed, in a sore strait."

There was a moment's silence, and then the forest echoes were awakened by hideous howls, apparently of pain, which proceeded from the great chest of Gideon. The Indians gazed in astonishment and distrust. These howls of pain were so sudden, that they feared some trap.

"Oh—ho—ho—ho!" roared the Cornishman.

The Creeping Snake approached from the village. But

he was not alone ; another warrior, of gigantic stature, accompanied him. His name was Wah-a-dah, or the "Big Bison."

The Creeping Snake and this latter approached the two prisoners.

"Humph!" said the former, grunting gutturally ; "the pale-faces know how to cry. They are afraid of death."

A gleam of satisfaction was on his tawny features, for nothing so pleases an Indian warrior as to succeed in forcing cries of fear or pain from his enemies. Still, he was somewhat doubtful of the genuineness of these cries, and approached to examine as to the cause.

"What is the reason that the white man howls like the wolf of the prairies ? Is he afraid to die ?"

Gideon redoubled his outcries.

"My servant is in pain," said Sir Edward ; "the cords hurt his flesh. The Creeping Snake is a great warrior ; he cannot wish to torture a prisoner who is soon to die. The Great Spirit looks angrily on such a deed."

The Creeping Snake, still suspicious, made a sign for the two Indians who acted as guards to approach and examine the cords. The savages advanced towards Gideon, one on each side. They saw that really the cords had been bound so tight as to bury themselves in the flesh. In the Indian tongue they told this to the chief, who in a few guttural words directed them to ease the bonds. To do this, one of them bent down on each side of the Cornishman. This was the opportunity for which Gideon was waiting. With one tremendous effort of his Herculean strength he burst all the grass-ropes at once. It was the work of a single second. Then, ere the astonished savages could even recover from their stooping posture, he seized one in each hand by the solitary scalp-lock on the

head ; then, first throwing them apart at arm's length, he brought their heads together with a terrible crash, literally crushing them like nut-shells. The savages fell with but one groan. Gideon, snatching their two tomahawks, bounded towards his master. A few blows severed the bonds which held him, and he also was free.

Gideon handed one of the tomahawks to Sir Edward, and master and servant threw themselves furiously on the two remaining Indians. The struggle was short, for, taken by surprise, and confounded by the sudden release of their prisoners, and their no less sudden and vigorous attack, they were at a disadvantage. Soon each of the two were stretched bleeding on the ground. Not a moment too soon, however ; for the Creeping Snake and the Big Bison giving the Ottamanko war-cry, rushed on the white men. The Big Bison attacked Gideon, while the Creeping Snake selected his master as his antagonist.

Gideon parried the first tremendous blow dealt at him by the Big Bison, and then, rushing underneath his guard, pinned him by the throat. This was a favourite manoeuvre of the Cornishman's, and seldom failed to be successful ; for once let him get a fair grip, and his enormous strength made short work of his antagonist.

Meanwhile, Sir Edward succeeded in warding off the blows of the Creeping Snake, and inflicting a severe wound on his shoulder. But now, aroused by the war-cry, the whole of the warriors from the village came rushing to the assistance of the two chiefs. Gideon had just succeeded in wrenching away the knife which the Big Bison had drawn, when they were upon him. Sir Edward, too, had dashed the tomahawk from the hand of the Creeping Snake, and, bounding forward, was on the point of cleaving his skull open, when an Indian attacked him

from behind, wounding him severely in the arm. He had but just time to turn and defend himself against this new adversary, when several more were upon him.

"Courage, master — courage!" shouted the faithful Gideon, dashing among his foes, and doing fearful execution.

Already three had fallen beneath his ponderous swinging blow. Alas, however! the brave Cornishman did not himself escape. His foes were so numerous, that it was impossible to guard against all their weapons. Wounded in several places, he still fought on desperately, panting and roaring like a bull at bay. The deadly tomahawks crashed and rattled one against the other as the unequal contest went on. Now the poor Cornishman is surrounded on all sides. In vain he dashes forward, and strikes down one of his enemies; others press around, and deal deadly blows at his head and body from behind and on all sides. Fainting with loss of blood, he still fights desperately on, and, even in his last dire extremity thinking of his master, shouts forth words of encouragement, when each moment brings him nearer to certain death.

Meanwhile, Sir Edward, his back against a tree, defends himself with desperate resolution against the unequal odds. With the energy and fury of despair he fights desperately on, resolved to sell his life dearly. He, like Gideon, is almost overpowered by numbers. One—two—three have fallen before him; but to what avail? Others supply their places, and, faint with loss of blood, his arm weary with the continued exertion, it is evident that all must soon be over. Master and servant are streaming with blood, and see keep their feet by nothing short of a miracle.

Gideon is the first to stagger and fall. With one last

desperate effort, however, he recovers himself, and, with tremendous yell of rage and despair, he once more leaps to his feet, and another savage goes down with cloven skull. The next moment his master is beaten down on one knee. His strength fails him—his eye-sight grows dim. The savages, with a howl of triumph, are on the point of overwhelming him; when a loud shout from the woods in their rear answers the last despairing cry of Gideon; instantly succeeding it there is heard the report of fire-arms.

Bang!

The next moment eight more of the Indians are weltering in their blood. Another shout of defiance from the woods.

The Ottamankos pause and look aghast at the bodies of the eight warriors laid low by that close and deadly discharge.

Once again comes the report of fire-arms.

Bang!

The leaden hail whistles among them, and eight more of the Ottamanko braves are writhing in the agonies of death. Then there follows a sound which they all know well—

The war-whoop of the Salhanas!

“Saved—saved!” shouted Sir Edward, leaping to his feet, and again with renewed life dashing at his foes. “Gideon, where are you?”

“Here am I, master,” was the reply, in a voice husky from the terrible exertion he had undergone.

Master and servant now again prepared to do battle for their lives. But there was no need for it. Another war-whoop made the woods ring, and a party of Indians and white men dashed from the woods, and rushed towards

the Ottamankos. These latter did not wait to receive the attack. Some three or four-and-twenty of their warriors dead, and many more wounded, they were disheartened and terrified, and took to precipitate flight. One more discharge into the midst of their flying ranks, and the battle was fought out and won ; for there was no enemy left on the field but the dead and dying.]

We need scarcely say who were the welcome deliverers. Informed by the Baron De Morny of the capture and imminent danger of Sir Edward and Gideon, the four white men, accompanied by some twenty Salhana Indians, hastened to the rescue.

De Morny and his friend Madroy hastened to attend to the wounds of Sir Edward Dudley. None of them were serious, fortunately, although he was nigh fainting from his loss of blood. His wounds were soon bound up, and a draught of wine somewhat reanimated him, and he was enabled to walk without assistance.

Gideon, too, although much more severely hurt, also declared himself as well as ever, and boasted that it would have been all right, even if succour had not arrived. It was only a question of time, he said ; in a few more minutes he would have put all those naked savages to flight. Only a question of time, indeed ! but it was a question of how many minutes the two brave Englishmen had to live ; for assuredly their doom was sealed but for the timely aid, although Gideon would not allow it.

“ Where is this William Warner you speak of ? ” asked Sir Edward of De Morny, when he was somewhat recovered.

De Morny looked round, but could not at first see him.

“ Pest ! ” he muttered ; “ I thought the fellow would have gone mad with impatience when he heard you were

prisoners ; and now that the work is done, and all is well, he has disappeared."

Suddenly, however, the Gascon espied him leaning against a tree in the forest.

" Ah ! there he is—I see him ! "

" Assist me, then, my good Baron ; lend me your arm—I wish to speak with him."

Then, assisted by the Gascon, Sir Edward tottered slowly and painfully towards the tree against which leaned William Warner. And now they are face to face.

" Brother — Robert Dudley," said Sir Edward, with faltering voice, " do you not know me ? "

" I know you, Sir Edward Dudley," said the other, in a severe voice ; " I know you too well. You are my elder brother. What want you with me ? You robbed me of my love, and sought to rob me of my life—what more do you want ? "

These words were said in a tone of bitter reproach. Sir Edward Dudley turned very pale, and leaned against his companion for support. There was no wound visible on his head or face ; the blood had been all wiped away, and the wounds on his body were also not apparent.

" What ails him ? " asked Robert Dudley of De Morny, seeing the sudden pallor of his brother.

" What ails him ? — why, he is wounded and faint. Stay a moment—I will give him wine from my flask."

At hearing that his brother was wounded, a flush of shame came over the handsome features of Robert Dudley ; he remembered how they had played together as boys at their mother's knee, how they had knelt together as men at their father's death-bed. A rush of old memories and associations overwhelmed him ; for one moment he paused irresolute. Meanwhile, De Morny had administered a

draught of wine, which effectually revived the wounded man ; the colour came again to his cheek, and he turned sadly and slowly away.

“Edward,” said Robert Dudley, calling him back.

He turned and looked, waiting for the other to speak. Robert Dudley paused for one more moment. Again the old memories and associations came over him ; he saw before him his brother—a brother who, it is true, had bitterly wronged him, but still a brother—he saw him before him pale, sad, wounded, and faint. Then his proud spirit gave way.

“Edward !” he said, opening his arms, “brother—all is forgotten and forgiven !”

The next moment the two brothers were locked in each other's arms.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A BAND OF BROTHERS.

It was not safe to remain longer near the Ottamanko camp ; for, although they had been put to flight, they might return in increased numbers. Accordingly, the whole party started back for the village of the Salhanas. Two horses had been brought with them, and the two wounded men were mounted on these. In the course of a few hours they arrived safely at the Salhana encampment.

“Welcome, brother, to our home,” said Robert Dudley, assisting Sir Edward to dismount. “Come to my hut. You need repose, and your wounds must be seen to ; then, to-morrow I promise you I will show you some wonders.

"Stay," Sir Edward Dudley, "let me first thank these gentlemen, who so gallantly came to our assistance."

Sir Edward thanked each in turn—Madroy, De Brissac, and the valiant Gascon ; nor did he forget to express his gratitude to their Indian allies. The white men cordially shook his hand, and congratulated him on his escape, while the Indians acknowledged his thanks by merely bending their heads in silence. Then Robert Dudley conducted his brother to his hut, and pointed out to him his couch. This was a bed of dried grass, simply covered by the skin of a puma ; but, tired and weary as he was, no bed of down was ever so grateful as was this primitive couch. He slept all the remainder of that day and night, and awoke on the following morning so much refreshed, that he declared himself as well as ever. Fortunately none of his wounds were dangerous, and all were progressing favourably.

"And now let us talk of the future," said Robert. "We are once again friends—let us return to our country together ; there are yet long days of happiness in store for us. The sight of the old hall, the old park, and the old woods and forests in which we used to hunt together, will be welcome to our eyes. Everything will doubtless be the same. Let us think of the past five years as a dream. Let us imagine that we went to sleep, and dreamed of all the perils, hardships, and miseries we have undergone ; let us ——"

Suddenly he checked himself ; he thought of Eva, and the memory made him turn first red and then pale. Sir Edward divined his thoughts, but said nothing. It was too embarrassing a subject for them to discuss yet.

"Robert, I cannot return to England yet."

"You cannot return ! and why ?"

"Because I have promised to meet a young friend of mine, a brave and gallant young Englishman. I came to this country in his ship. He has been foully and cruelly wronged by these treacherous Spaniards, and I have sworn to stay with him, and exact a terrible vengeance."

"And where is he, this friend of yours?"

"He has gone to England, but will return with a vessel of war and a numerous crew; then he proposes to wage an eternal war against the Spaniards. Oh! believe me, brother, this young man will some day be great and powerful. His name is Francis Drake, and it is written that he shall succeed; he is born under a star which will not suffer him to fail, even if he wished so to do."

"Tell me all about this Francis Drake—you interest me."

"Then Sir Edward proceeded to relate to his brother the history of his acquaintance with the young captain—how he came to his aid at Margate, and how, taking a strange fancy to him, he furnished him with the means to equip and freight a vessel to the New World. He told how shamefully and treacherously he had been plundered by Don Placido, and his cargo confiscated. Lastly, with flashing eye, he told of the abduction of poor little Amy. When he had concluded his narration, Robert said—

"You are right, brother—such infamy deserves to be punished. Not only do I approve of your resolution, but I will myself return to aid you."

"You, Robert!—you after five years' absence from your native land, you will again expose yourself to perils and dangers?"

"Will I!—will I not? Why should I not? What is life without excitement—without adventure? Where have you appointed to meet this Captain Drake?"

"At the Island of Trinidad."

"And when?"

Sir Edward Dudley told him the appointed day.

"Good—I will be there also. And now let us get our breakfasts, for I have a little journey to propose afterwards."

Accordingly, the two brothers left the hut, and sought a large building in the centre of the village. This was used by the whites as a dining-room, and a long table and a bench ran down the centre. Here they found Madroy, De Brissac, and De Morny, who were awaiting them. After the repast had been finished, Robert Dudley, who had hitherto been known by his friends as William Warner, addressed them:—

"Messieurs Madroy, De Morny, and De Brissac, I have a little journey to propose."

"A journey!" they cried in surprise; "and whither?"

"No matter; that you shall know when you arrive there. You are all rich, are you not?" continued Robert Dudley to them.

"Yes," grumbled De Morny, "we are rich in one sense, for we have plenty of gold. But of what use to us is gold? We might as well be in prison as here; for we have no opportunity of enjoying our wealth."

"All in good time, Baron," said Robert Dudley, smiling "all in good time. You have hitherto known me as William Warner, the Cape Breton fisherman; you are now to know me as Robert Dudley, an English gentleman. As William Warner I always kept my word, did I not?"

"Undoubtedly," they all cried. "Without you we should have been all lost."

"Then I will not fail likewise to keep my word now."

I will provide you with the means of returning to France with your treasure ; in return, I ask of you something."

"Name it !" they all cried in a breath.

"I go also to Europe ; but I shall return again. I wish you, my friends, to return with me. We have been companions so long, that I should be loath now to part company. Let us, then, be a band of brothers, and seek adventure and glory all over the world. I promise you plenty of profit, plenty of honour, plenty of pleasure, and plenty of danger."

"*Ma foi !*" said De Morny, twirling his moustache. "I like pleasure and danger also, therefore I for 'one am disposed to accept your offer."

"But I have yet another reason," said Robert Dudley, "for wishing you to return with me. My brother—our friend here, Sir Edward Dudley—has a deadly feud on hand. He and a friend, one Captain Francis Drake, have sworn eternal enmity against the Spaniards. They have bitterly outraged and wronged him, and he will take a revenge which shall ring to the four corners of the world. His friend has gone to England, and will return with an armed vessel, an English frigate, with abundance of guns, arms, and men. I also am going to England, and shall return with a ship, with arms, with men. What say you, my friends—will you return with me ?"

"We will !" they all cried.

"Good ; and now let us start on our journey, for I warrant I have something in store which will astonish you."

Horses were brought, and the five white men mounted, and prepared to set out for their journey. Gideon Glosop and the chief of the Salhanas also accompanied them. The latter—no other than the Falling Rain himself—alone

seemed in the secret with Robert as to their destination. He and Robert led the way, and the party struck into a road through the forest which led to the westward. After a couple of hours' ride, they arrived at the foot of a mountain range. It was too steep for them to ride up, so they dismounted, and leaving Gideon with the horses, followed the Falling Rain, and commenced the ascent. In the course of half an hour they came to a gorge or gully, which a cataract or stream had worn in the side of the mountain. A little further on, they found themselves on a small plateau or flat ledge, about twenty feet wide. From this ledge the mountain ascended perpendicularly, so that they were at a loss to know how they were to proceed further. This, however, was not the intention of Robert and the Falling Rain; for, in place of seeking for a path, the Indian struck a light with a flint and steel, and lit two torches of resinous wood which he had brought with him. He and Robert then advanced to a pile of immense rocks at the foot of the perpendicular rise of the mountain, and commenced rolling them away. At last they perceived an aperture, just sufficiently large to admit of a man's body. The Indian, taking the two torches, crawled through this opening, and disappeared. Robert beckoned to the others, and followed him. The others did likewise, and found themselves crawling on their hands and knees down a narrow sort of tunnel, which seemed to lead right into the interior of the mountain. The passage was not more than three feet high, and being also exceedingly narrow, they had great difficulty in forcing their way along. After some ten minutes' toil, however, it gradually got wider and loftier; and all at once they found themselves in a small cavern or grotto, about ten feet in height, and thirty in circumference. They raised

themselves to their feet, and looked round them in wonder. Robert Dudley took a torch from the hands of the Indian, and holding it aloft, so as to throw a light on the roof and walls of the grotto, said—

“Now, my friends, what think you of this? Did I not tell you that I would show you something that would astonish you? Have I not kept my word?”

But none of the party could make any answer, otherwise than by broken ejaculations. They were speechless with admiration and wonder; for the whole of the walls and roof of the grotto were glittering with gems—emeralds, carbuncles, and even the precious rubies were there in lavish profusion. The cavern absolutely blazed with the myriads of flashing lights which they reflected from the torches; there was not a single stone on which one or more gems did not sparkle. From wall to wall—from roof to floor—jewels, jewels, jewels! Green emeralds, rich red carbuncles, and crimson rubies, seemed to vie with each other in brilliance. There were other stones, too, whose names they knew not, but which were equally dazzling and beautiful.”

Sir Edward was the first to speak.

“Robert,” he said, “are all these real gems? Are they real rubies and emeralds we see glittering before our eyes in such profusion?”

“Yes, brother—every one real gems, and of the first water; and, what is more, all mine—all ours!”

Exclamations of delight and wonder broke from the others, as they feasted their eyes on the glorious sight. De Morny could not restrain his rapture.

“May I take but one of these jewels as a sample, to convince me, when we have left this place, that it was not all a dream—a delusion?”

"Take one—take twenty, if you please."

De Morny hastened to possess himself of an emerald, a ruby, and another jewel, the name of which he did not know. The others followed his example, and soon each had detached from the rock one or two of the sparkling gems.

"Now, gentlemen," said Robert Dudley, "you know another reason why I must return to America. We cannot take all this treasure with us now; and I do not mean to leave any for the Spaniards—of that you may rest assured. "Behold, gentlemen," he continued, after a pause—"behold the freight for our ship! Surely a richer laden vessel than ours will be has never sailed from the New World to the Old. And now, gentlemen, let us go."

All, however, were so rapt in the contemplation of the array of gems, that it was some time ere they could tear themselves away. At last, however, they all proceeded along the narrow tunnel, and once again gained the open air. Robert Dudley and the Falling Rain proceeded to roll back the stones, so as to conceal, as before, the mouth of the cavern.

"Now, gentlemen, I have shown you that which hitherto was known but to myself and the Salhana chief, Falling Rain; we have now common cause in all things. Let us be a band of brothers. There are three of us Englishmen, three Frenchmen, and one Indian; for you, my noble Indian warrior, mean to cast in your lot with us—is it not so?"

The Indian replied by a grunt of approbation, and Robert Dudley continued—

"For the present we must separate; my brother, Sir Edward, the Indian chief, you, De Morny, De Brissac, and Madroy, will remain in America—I shall sail for the Old World, taking as much gold with me as I can. In

six months I will return, and we will meet all together again. I mean it for one—what say you, my friends?”

“Agreed,” they all cried; “we mean it also.”

“We are, then, as I said before, gentlemen, a band of brothers, devoted to the same object—bent on adventure, glory, pleasure, and enriching ourselves beyond the wildest dreams of man; and, in the second place, and principally, to wage an eternal war against these accursed and treacherous Spaniards. English, French, and Indians we will together hunt them from the face of the earth. To England and France, through us, will belong the honour of having destroyed and broken up their infamous sovereignty!”

Then they all joined hands, and registered a solemn vow so to act. Then they commenced to descend the hill, and made the best of their way back to the Salhana village, where we will for the present leave them, and return to Francis Drake, whom we last saw sailing from the harbour of Santa Marta.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE RETURN OF THE CORSAIR—ATTACK ON THE SPANISH GALLEON.

MORE than five months have elapsed since the date of our last chapter. It is the 25th of January, 1565. A large vessel is sailing westward in the waters of the Spanish main, in the neighbourhood of the Bermudas. Her name is the *San Domingo*, and she is a Spanish galleon, or treasure-ship, deeply laden with ingots of gold and silver,

with indigo and cochineal, and other valuable merchandise.

The Captain of the *San Domingo* is named Don Esteban Gonzales. He is a man of some thirty years of age, brave, and, as times go, sufficiently honourable; but the principal merit which procured him the command of a royal galleon, was the fact that he was related to a powerful minister at the Spanish court.

It is noon, and Don Esteban is pacing the high poop of the Spanish galleon, is in earnest conversation with his first lieutenant. Let us join them.

"Yes, my friend," said the Spanish captain, I have decided on a serious step when once we arrive at Cadiz."

"And that is — ?"

"And that is, to espouse the Senorita Marguirita Citronero. Do you not think I show my taste in my choice?"

"Most undoubtedly, senor captain. The senorita is acknowledged to be the handsomest maiden in Cadiz; she would grace an emperor's throne."

The Captain stroked his moustache, and seemed well pleased at his Lieutenant's approbation.

"Do you know, Don Gabriel," he said, "I think, on my arrival, I shall resign my command. To tell you the truth, I am somewhat weary of the sea. My uncle, the Duke of Almeida, can doubtless procure me a profitable and honourable appointment at the court at Madrid."

The Lieutenant merely bowed his head.

"And you, Don Gabriel," continued the captain, "you would not object, I should think, to relieve me of the command—you would not mind being yourself the commander of the *San Domingo*?"

Don Gabriel coloured with pleasure.

"You are aware," continued Don Esteban, "that I ventured half my fortune in this voyage. Hitherto, it has been most successful, and I doubt not that the money I risked will be at least trebled. That will make me a rich man, so that, even if I had no interest at court, I need not, unless I chose, continue to command a galleon as a profession."

At this moment a sailor from the mast-head cried in Spanish—

"Sail ho !"

"A sail !" said Don Esteban. "Let us come aloft, Don Gabriel, and see what you can make of her."

Accordingly, taking a telescope, the Captain and his Lieutenant ascended to the mizen-top, and proceeded to survey and speculate on the strange sail.

"It is a frigate," said the captain, after closely observing the strange ship for some time.

"Yes," said the other ; "a large frigate, and apparently fully armed."

"Can you see what flag she flies ?"

"Yes ; the English flag is at her main."

"An English frigate in these waters ! Strange !—what can she be doing here ? Ah ! she alters her course, and is steering for us !"

"You are right, captain ; she is steering right across our starboard bow."

"See—she hauls up her mainsail and foresail, as if preparing for action ! In a few minutes we shall be quite close. What can be the meaning of this ? Surely she is not going to attack us ? We are not at war with England !"

* * * * *

Let us leave the Spanish galleon, and transport ourselves on board the English ship.

This was a large and well-built frigate. Although she carried but a single tier of guns, these were of heavy metal, and of the best and most solid manufacture. Her tall masts supported a crowd of canvas, which sent her bounding through the foam at a great pace towards the Spaniards. Her crew were assembled on deck, busy clearing up ropes and all impediments, and running in and out the great black guns, apparently with the design of seeing everything in readiness. Pistols, flint-guns, cutlasses, and boarding-pikes are distributed about the decks, while boys are stationed at each hatch, ready to pass up buckets of ammunition.

Whether at war with Spain or not, it is evident that the crew of the Englishman are preparing for a fight. Her decks are crowded by a numerous and vigorous crew mostly young men. Such as are not engaged at the cannons are armed with boarding-pikes, cutlasses, and axes, in preparation for boarding the Spaniard.

Such is evidently the intention of the Englishman ; for the Spanish flag has been flying for some time at the mizen of the other, while the only notice taken by the Captain of the Englishman is to order the boarders on to the star-board side, in readiness to throw themselves on board.

The cannon are all loaded and run out, while a gunner stands at the breech of each with a lighted match, waiting but the word from the captain to apply it, and discharge the gun.

The English captain is standing on the high poop, close to the steerage-wheel, directing the ship's course. He raises his voice, and addressing the crew, says—

“ My lads, I promised, when you shipped with me, that each of you should return to England with plenty of Spanish gold. See yonder galleon—that shall be our

first prize. She is ours—she must be ours ; and the gold and silver she carries, in place of going to Spain, shall enrich you, my brave fellows. This is but the first of the many deeply-laden Spaniards which shall become our prize. Let her deck run with blood—no matter ; have not I declared an eternal war against the treacherous Spaniard ? Stand by your arms, then, my men, and when I give the word, throw yourselves on her deck, and cut down all who oppose you ; spare none, while a man resists. Let their blood flow like water, till the accursed Spanish flag is hauled down, and the English ensign floats in its place. Now, my lads, are you all ready ?”

A loud shout rang forth from the crew at these words. “Hurrah for Captain Drake ! Three cheers for the brothers Dr ke ! Down with the Spaniards !”

These and other shouts greeted the young captain's words. They were now barely two hundred yards from the *San Domingo*, and well within range of the cannon ; still, however, Francis Drake did not give the word to fire. The English ensign was floating at the mizen-peak ; Captain Drake, taking a flag from the locker, bent it on to the signal halyards at the main, and quickly hoisted it aloft. They was displayed to the breeze, in white letters on a black ground, the words, “*The Avenger*,” for such was the frigate named.

In the meantime, the *San Domingo* made every preparation for a combat, as the intentions of the Englishman could be no longer doubtful, as the captain of the galleon could see the gunners at their posts, and the decks crowded with armed men.

The two ships rapidly approached each other. The crew of each could now distinctly perceive each other, as they stood to their guns, awaiting the word to pour death

and destruction on the enemy. Francis Drake stood on the high poop of the *Avenger*, with his brothers Will and Michael, who were respectively his first and second lieutenants, on each side of him. Suddenly he gave a start of astonishment, for he perceived Amy and Harry on deck. He had given orders that they should remain below ; but the young girl, with rare heroism, had donned a suit of her brother's apparel, and had come on deck, resolved to share the danger. A woollen cap was on her head, concealing her beautiful golden tresses. A loose pilot-jacket covered her slight and elegant figure, while her legs were encased in a pair of sea-boots reaching far above the knee.

"Amy," cried Francis, "what are you doing here? Did I not order you to remain below?"

"Brother," cried the young girl, impetuously, "why should you be astonished? You are about to fight and endanger yourself; why, then, should not I and Harry share the danger and the glory? We will remain here, for it is but right we should."

"Amy, Amy!" cried Francis, distractedly; "what is the good of your thus carelessly exposing yourself? You cannot assist, but will be in the way, while you run a risk of death, or capture."

But Amy replied, with determination—

"To-day, as always, I will share your dangers; I will not be refused."

There was so much firmness and heroism in the speech of the young girl—the bright flush on her cheek and her glittering eye bespoke such determination—that Francis, while regretting the danger she was exposing herself to, could not but admire the spirit which prompted the act.

"Amy, be it as you wish. God is good, and it is not written that you are to perish."

And now the two vessels are within a dozen yards of each other. Francis Drake seizes the helm, and altering the *Avenger's* course, so as to bring her broadside to bear on the Spaniard, he shouts in a loud voice—

“Ready with the cannon!”

The gunners blow their lighted fuses, and wait anxiously for the word.

“Fire!” shouts the captain, when the two vessels are almost touching.

Instantly the roaring report of the cannon is heard, followed by the splintering of timber, and the shrieks and groans of the wounded.

The discharge took terrible effect on the galleon, delivered, as it was, at so short a range. No sooner was the broadside delivered, than, by a motion of the helm, the course of the Englishman was again changed, and she is run bow on to the galleon. The latter then delivers her fire. The guns, however, having been slightly too much elevated, take effect principally among the sails and rigging; a few only of the crew being wounded by splinters.

And now the two ships come crashing together.

“Boarders, away!” shouts the English captain, and instantly the crew of the *Avenger* leap on to the bulwarks, and prepare to board. But the Spaniards, who are not wanting in naval skill, have backed their mainyard, and, ere the grappling-irons have been fixed, the vessels are again clear of one another. A similar manœuvre on behalf of the *Avenger* once again brings the two ships broadside to broadside. The cannon are run in, loaded, and again fired with terrible effect.

Again and again is this dose of death repeated, till both vessels are hidden in the smoke. The rapid and cool fire

of the Englishmen is much more effective than that of his adversary, whose decks are soon choked with the dead and dying. But the Spaniard is a much larger vessel than the other, and carries, therefore, heavier guns, and a more numerous crew.

The shouts of the combatants, and the roar of the guns, are now mingled together in terrible concord ; the timbers crash and splinter under the iron hail, while the sails and rigging hang in shreds, and some of the ponderous yards, torn from their fastenings, come crashing down on deck. This havoc among the rigging is much more severe on board the *Avenger*, from the fact of the Spanish guns having been more elevated, while the carnage on board the latter is proportionately greater.

The battle had now raged for more than half an hour, when the rising breeze dispersing the smoke which enveloped them, revealed another vessel at about the distance of a mile. On board the Englishman eight men had been killed, and about a dozen wounded ; while the decks of the *San Domingo* were cumbered with the dead and dying, so that the two crews were now about brought to an equality. Again, the fire of the Englishman was both more rapid and more precise than that of the other, while the heavy guns of the Spaniard, on the other hand, created terrible havoc on board the *Avenger* when well-directed.

It was at this moment that the eyes of both the captains were turned anxiously towards the strange vessel, now rapidly approaching them. What was she—a friend or foe ? Such was the thought, both of Francis Drake and Don Estaban. Who would prove victorious in the terrible combat ?

Francis Drake encouraged his men, and waved his sword defiantly towards the Spanish captain, whom he espied

on the poop. Don Estaban gazed anxiously and somewhat despairingly on his own deck, cumbered with corpses and wounded men, and then towards the stranger. Suddenly the strange vessel opened fire, and the shot came roaring through the air above their heads. Still they did not know on board the combatants at which vessel it was aimed. A temporary lull took place in the firing, and the crews of each gazed anxiously out at the other vessel. Suddenly a loud and ringing cheer burst forth from the crew of the *Avenger*, while the Captain of the *San Domingo* gave vent to a cry of despair; for at that instant a flag was run up to the mizen-peak of the other vessel. It was the English flag, hence the cheer of one party, and the dismay of the other.

“An Englishman — a friend!” cried Francis Drake, joyfully.

“An enemy!” muttered the Spanish captain, gloomily.

And now the fight recommenced, the English fighting like very devils, and the Spaniards with the desperation of despair. Captain Drake once again directs his vessel’s bow on to the Spaniard, who endeavours in vain to avoid him. The two ships crash together, and, deserting their guns, the crew of the *Avenger* leap into the rigging and bulwarks, and throw themselves furiously on to the deck of the Spaniard.

And now commences a terrible hand-to-hand conflict. Cutlasses and axes crash and rattle, and pistol-shots succeed the roar of the great guns. Inch by inch the Spaniards are forced back, till at last the Englishmen make good their footing on the deck. In vain some fifty of the bravest of the Spaniards group themselves around their captain, and endeavour to stem the torrent of the boarders. The “Demons of the Sea,” as Drake’s men

were afterwards called by the Spaniards, dashed on with irresistible fury ; the Spaniards fell right and left before the cutlasses, the axes, and the pistols of the assailants.

Don Gabriel fell to the deck, wounded at the same time by a pistol-bullet in the chest, and a sword-cut on the head. It was written that the unfortunate lieutenant should never be a captain.

Don Estaban, already wounded by a cutlass, is lying bleeding on the deck, still with desperate bravery encouraging his men, and waving his sword. One of the Englishmen runs at him with a boarding-pike, and the next instant Don Estaban would have been run through the body, had not a hand arrested his assailant. It was the hand of Francis Drake.

“Surrender !” said the young Corsair, in Spanish.

Don Estaban still hesitated, and glanced around. But what he saw did not encourage him to further resistance, for his men were driven back in every direction. At least fifty dead and wounded men lay immediately by him, and he perceived that he was completely surrounded by the enemy ; then, with bitter regret, the Spaniard raised himself on his elbow, and tendered his sword to Francis.

“I surrender my sword and my ship, sir,” he said ; “but, in the name of his Majesty King Philip the Second of Spain, I protest against this piratical seizure !”

Francis Drake smiled a bitter smile.

“Protest away, senor ; protest—it is your right. I once protested, and your countrymen were deaf. It is now my turn.” Then, turning to his crew, he cried : “Down with your arms, my lads ; the galleon is ours.”

The Englishmen, with a loud shout, now proceeded to take unresisted possession of the ship. The carnage on

board had been awful ; for, of a crew of a hundred and eighty-four men, thirty were killed, and more than sixty wounded—many mortally. The Spanish flag was hauled down, the English hoisted in its place, and the crew of the *Avenger* hastened to take off the hatches, and ransack the galleon of her treasure.

Francis Drake remained on the poop of the galleon, sword in hand, his foot on the Spanish flag, until the cargo of gold and silver had been shifted to the *Avenger*. At the end of half an hour, his two lieutenants, Will and Michael, approached, and the former said—

“We have taken all the gold, silver, and valuables on board ; there remains now but some packages of drugs and cochineal, also some bales of merchandize.”

“No matter,” said Francis, disdainfully ; “we are no longer merchants—we have nothing to do with bales and boxes. Our game is gold, silver, and vengeance !” Then, turning with a mocking air to Don Esteban, Francis said : “Doubtless, Captain, you would like to take some of your goods with you to Spain, to prove that you have really been to America. You are welcome to the bales of merchandize, for we are no merchants.”

“So I perceive,” said the Spaniard, bitterly ; “but since you have murdered half my crew, and plundered me of all the gold and silver, you may as well complete your work, and take what else there is on board the galleon.”

Don Esteban doubtless thought to wound the English corsair by these words ; Francis Drake, however, replied, with a disdainful smile on his face—

“Senor Captain, since you speak of plundering, I must inform you that I learned the trade of your own countrymen.”

Don Esteban scowled at the speaker, and was about to

reply by some fresh insolence, when Francis interrupted him—

“Listen, senor: it does not suit me now to explain to you why I am the enemy of the Spaniards—why I have declared an eternal war against them, of which you are the first victim. Perhaps you know Don José de Castanares?”

“Yes; Captain José de Castanares is one of my friends.”

“I don’t compliment you, then, on the fact,” said Francis, bitterly. The Spaniard looked surprised. “Yes,” continued Francis, “I repeat, I do not consider the friendship of Don José a thing to be boasted of; for he is a villain, a thief, a coward, and a ruffian! Perhaps, as he is your friend, you are going to see him in Spain?”

“I certainly expect to see him.”

“Good. Well, on the day when you see him, tell him that Francis Drake is cruising about the Spanish Main in search of him and his ship; and that the day on which he meets him he will exact a terrible vengeance. Then, doubtless, Don José will inform you why Francis Drake has turned corsair. Tell him that I wish to see him—that I am waiting for him.”

“That you are waiting for him,” replied the Spaniard, bitterly, “to plunder him also.”

“You are right, my friend. I am waiting for him, first to plunder him, and then to kill him! Adieu, Captain; do not forget my message.”

And so saying, Francis Drake made his way back over the dead and dying to his own ship.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A STRANGE MEETING.

THE grappling-irons were cast off, and the Spanish galleon, with the remnant of her crew and cargo, was permitted to go on her way. At this moment the report of guns was again heard from the strange brig. These, however, were unshotted, and were intended as a salute to the conqueror in the battle.

Francis Drake, who was attentively regarding her, perceived a boat lowered and manned with four sailors, with one person in the stern-sheets. The boat rapidly approached, and arrived alongside the *Avenger*—the stranger leaped on board, and advanced towards the captain.

“Captain Francis Drake, I believe?” said the newcomer.

Francis bowed, but looked surprised at being recognized. The stranger offered his hand, which Francis took in increasing astonishment. Meanwhile, Will, Michael, Amy, Harry, and the crew surveyed the stranger with looks of wonder, for they saw in him an extraordinary resemblance to Francis.

“My name is Francis Drake, and I am the captain of this ship; but I cannot conceive how you could have divined the fact.”

“Oh! that is simple enough,” said the stranger, smiling. “What other Englishman than yourself has declared an eternal war against the Spaniards? Allow me to congratulate you on the issue of the combat. Be assured that, if you had required assistance, it should not have been wanting. My vessel is small, but my cannon are of the best, and my sailors are very devils to fight.”

"And you, sir—who, then, are you," asked Francis, "who so generously meant to come to our assistance, if needed? I perceive that your brig bears the English flag, and that you are an Englishman."

"My name is Robert Dudley," replied the stranger; "I doubt not you have heard my brother, Sir Edward Dudley, speak of me."

"Ah!" cried Francis, joyfully; "you are the brother of our friend and benefactor, Sir Edward? Believe me, we have not forgotten all his kindness. Where, then, is he?"

"At the present moment, I know not; but have you not an appointed place of meeting?"

"Ah, yes; the island of Trinidad."

"Then doubt not that he will be there; I also am going there to meet him."

Francis Drake then requested his visitor to descend with him into the cabin, and partake of some refreshment. Then Robert Dudley proceeded to relate the history of the events with which the reader is acquainted—his meeting with his brother—their adventures with the Indians—his departure for Europe—and, finally, his return to the Spanish Main, where he had promised again to meet Sir Edward and the three Frenchmen, in order that they might all join in a crusade against the Spaniards.

"And now, my friend Captain Drake," said Robert Dudley, in conclusion; "you see I am here with you on the Spanish Main. I have brought with me from England this brig, the *Nemesis*. She is well armed, and carries a crew of forty brave men; she is at your service—my brother, our friends the three brave Frenchmen, whom I have mentioned to you, are also at your service. Together we will sweep the seas of these pestilent Spaniards, who

In their arrogance, dare to ill-treat and rob inoffensive strangers. What say you, my friend, shall the *Nemesis* and the *Avenger* be henceforth consorts? Shall my brother, myself, and my friends, also devote ourselves to the same object which inspires you? Shall we, together, carry terror and dismay all through Spanish America—plundering their galleons, pillaging their towns, and by leaguering ourselves with the Indians, whom they have oppressed and tyrannized over, slowly but surely undermine their power, till the Spanish flag shall wave no longer over an acre of land, nor be seen in all the blue waters of what is now called the Spanish Main? What say you, my brave friend? Are we, indeed, to be a band of brothers, with one object, one hope, one purse, and one spirit animating us—the spirit which has made England the great country she is—the spirit of enterprise and adventure—a spirit which, in the pursuit of glory, of honour, of adventure, braves all dangers, overcomes all obstacles, defies all hardships?”

Francis Drake gave his hand to Robert Dudley. “Sir,” he said, “I had the honour of knowing your brother, and thought him the most honourable, the best, and the bravest English gentleman I had ever met; I perceive now that he has in you the very counterpart of himself. I know not how to reply to so noble an offer. You volunteer to serve in a cause in which you are not interested, for, assuredly, it is I who have been wronged, and not you—it is I who have been robbed, insulted, and outraged; and yet you abandon a second time your country, in order to cast in your lot with strangers.”

“Ah! do not say so, Captain Drake; you are not a stranger to me, as you are a friend of my brother’s. I have an interest in the undertaking you have in view, for

it is also my brother's ; and, in addition to all this, I have another and a very great reason for returning to America."

"And that is——?"

"And that is to possess myself of a vast treasure—a treasure of incalculable value, in the shape of gold and jewels, which I discovered when dwelling with the Indians. Ah! you may look surprised, my good friend, but I assure you that I know of the existence of a treasure richer than was ever owned by king or emperor! Wait, my friend," he continued, smiling, "until the day when your sister, Miss Amy Drake, becomes the wife of my brother, and then you shall see what a wedding present I will give her! No empress or queen shall ever have such splendid jewels as the future Lady Dudley."

"My sister Amy—little Amy—the wife of your brother—Lady Dudley! Impossible, sir! you are amusing yourself with me," cried Francis, in astonishment, and colouring up, partly with anger, for he liked not what he considered a jest on such a subject.

"Ah! I see," said Robert Dudley, smiling, "I have been indiscreet, I find, in telling you that my brother means one day to demand of you the hand of your sister. But, as I have said so much, I may as well tell you all. Yes, Captain Drake, I repeat to you, that some day to make Miss Amy his wife is the wish dearest to the heart of Sir Edward Dudley." Then, seeing that Francis looked still bewildered and confused, he added—"Is it possible, sir, that such can be contrary to your wishes? Are you displeased to hear that a rich and honourable English gentleman has conceived an attachment for your sister?"

"No, no, a thousand times no!" replied Francis; "on the contrary, I have not words to express my gratitude and pleasure. I always knew that Sir Edward's was a great

and noble heart, but I never imagined that one so wealthy, so noble as himself, would look so low as poor little Amy for a wife."

"And Amy," said Robert Dudley, smiling, "what will she say? Think you that she will look with disfavour on my brother's suit?"

Francis Drake merely smiled in answer to this question, but well he could have answered had he so chosen, that Amy, so far from being displeased, would receive the tidings very differently. Francis Drake had long seen, in a thousand little actions and words of his young sister, that the brave and handsome English knight was ever first in her thoughts. He had seen this, and regretted it, for he never even surmised or thought it possible that Sir Edward would ever look on her otherwise than as a friend.

His delight, then, may be imagined at these words of Robert Dudley—words which were pleasant to him, both as a brother and a friend; as a friend, at this fresh proof of Sir Edward's nobility of heart—as a brother, at the happiness and honour in store for Amy.

"And now," said Robert, rising, "having partaken of your hospitality, Captain Drake, and related some of mine and my brother's adventures, what say you if we proceed on our course to the island of Trinidad, where, doubtless, we shall find my brother and his friends awaiting us."

Then they both went on deck together. As soon as they arrived on the poop, Michael Drake approached and said—

"Captain, your presence is required at the gangway."

Francis, who was about to give orders to set all sail, suddenly started—

"Sir," he said to Robert, "your kindness and generosity,

and the good tidings you have brought, almost made me forget a sad duty we have yet to perform."

"A sad duty?"

"Yes, to commit our dead to the sea ; for, alas ! some twelve of our brave sailors have met their death during the late battle.

Then Francis Drake and Robert Dudley proceeded to the gangway, where the corpses of the slain were lain side by side on a grating ; and all standing round with uncovered heads, in solemn silence, he read the burial service, and committed their bodies to the deep.

This sad duty accomplished, Robert Dudley descended into the boat which was alongside in waiting for him, and went on board his brig the *Nemesis*. Then the two vessels made all sail, in company, for the island of Trinidad.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE COUNCIL.

THE rendezvous agreed upon between Francis Drake and Sir Edward Dudley was not badly selected. The island of Trinidad was discovered by Christopher Columbus in the year 1498 ; for many years it was in the occupation of the Spaniards, but little by little it was abandoned by its new masters ; indeed, they would have been foolish to have spent their time in an unhealthy island, inhabited by the ferocious Caribbean Indians, when they had at their disposal the whole of a magnificent continent.

It is the 3rd of February, 1565 ; four bells (six o'clock) strikes on board the *Avenger* and the *Nemesis*, as side by side they sail into the harbour of Trinidad. At the sight

of the English flag floating from the mast-heads of the two ships, a great commotion may be observed among a group of people on the shore. A musket volley is fired in the air by way of salute, and the English flag is hoisted on a flagstaff, evidently prepared for the occasion. The *Avenger* and the brig immediately reply to this by a royal salute from their big guns.

No sooner had the vessels cast anchor, than two boats put off from the shore. In one boat was Sir Edward Dudley, the Chevalier Madroy, the Indian chief, Falling Rain, and several of his warriors ; in the other was the Count de Brissac, Gideon Glossop, and some other Indian braves. The sails of the *Avenger* were all clewed up and furled ; gay flags decorated each mast-head, and as the big guns thundered forth at regular intervals ; one would have thought that an admiral, or a royal personage, was coming on board. Sir Edward Dudley, wild with joy, leaped on the deck, and took in the group assembled to receive him in one rapid glance. There stood his brother Robert and his friend Francis Drake. Near them were Will, Michael, and Harry, and a little in the background little Amy, more charming than ever in her sailor's dress. They all hastened to meet him ; one after the other pressed forward to take his hand.

"Sir Edward," said Francis, his face radiant with pleasure, "it rejoices my heart once again to see you. It seems almost like old times."

Michael, Will, and Harry, too, all expressed their delight at seeing their old friend once again. Amy alone hung back, as if ashamed. Sir Edward gazed round in search of her. Francis saw the look, and guessed its import.

"Amy—little sister," he said, "where are you? Why do you not come forward and greet your old friend?" Amy advanced diffidently and shyly.

"Amy," murmured Sir Edward, also advancing, and looking in the young girl's face. "What, little one, are you not glad to see me?"

He took her hand in his, but still she made no answer, looking down in silent confusion. He repeated his question in a reproachful tone.

"Sir Edward," said the young girl, in a low voice, "I am very glad to see you, indeed; I hope you have been well." And that was all she said, after so long an absence! Sir Edward Dudley looked astonished, and raising her hand to his lips, was about to kiss it gallantly, but she snatched it away, colouring up to the temples, and said—

"No, no, Sir Edward! do not,"

"Pardon me, Amy," he said; "I did not mean to offend you."

"I am not offended," was the reply, "but—but——"

And then, poor child, she burst into tears. Sir Edward understood those tears, and, thinking it best to leave her to herself, he turned away, and approached Francis and his brother.

"Come," said Francis, "let us descend to the cabin; dinner is prepared, to which I hope you will all do justice."

"So be it; let us eat, drink, and be merry, for assuredly, after so long an absence, we have a right so to do. Come."

"Stay a moment," said Sir Edward; "Francis, let me introduce to you our two friends, the Chevalier de Madroy

and the Count de Brissac ; also these two brave Indian chiefs, our allies—the Falling Rain and the Bounding Panther.”

Francis shook them all cordially by the hand, and then led the way to the cabin, followed by the others.

“ But,” said Robert, looking around him, as soon as they had seated themselves, “ I see M. de Brissac and our friend Madroy ; but where is the Baron de Morny ? ”

“ Alas ! ” replied his brother, “ our friend, the brave Baron, is unfortunately a prisoner.”

“ A prisoner ! ” cried Robert Dudley, “ and to whom ? How did it happen ? ”

“ It is a long history ; shall I relate it now, or rather wait until you have finished your dinners ? ”

“ No, no ! not now,” cried Francis ; “ let us be merry now, and enjoy ourselves ; afterwards each of us shall relate what adventures have befallen since we parted.”

They now all proceeded to enjoy the good cheer provided for them. In truth, it was a merry meal ; the loud laughter and joyous tones of their voices bore evidence that on that occasion, at least, they had forgotten alike the perils of the past and those that awaited them in the future. As soon as the repast was concluded, wine and spirits were placed on the table, and Francis Drake commenced by giving an account of his first engagement with the Spanish galleon, the *San Domingo*. We will pass over that, as the reader already knows the history of the battle, and the result.

Now it was the turn of Sir Edward Dudley to relate how he had passed the last six months with the Indians, and how the Salhana warriors had become their firm allies, and also mortal foes to the Spaniards.

“ For four months after you left us, Robert, to set out

for England," said Sir Edward, "we lived happily and peaceably enough; we had no intention of commencing hostilities against the Spaniards, or any others, until your return. Two months ago we organized a party for the purpose of hunting the bison; we were on the point of starting, and were just burnishing up our arms, when the Salhana chief, the Falling Rain, appeared before us; his countenance was sad and gloomy.

" 'What is the matter, my friend?' I asked.

" 'One of my warriors,' he replied, 'has arrived from Santa Marta, bringing me bad news.'

" 'What news?'

" 'Don Placido de Ortigoza, who has discovered—I know not how—that there are rich mines on the banks of the Magdalena river, in our territory, has resolved to send a party of miners, escorted by soldiers, and has given orders for us to guide them in their search.'

" 'And what shall you do?' I asked. 'Have not the Spaniards sworn to you to respect your lands?'

" 'It is true.'

" 'And now they break their word?'

" 'That is also true.'

" 'And what then?'

" 'My white brother can understand that, in place of going to hunt with him, I must remain in the village, the Salhanas will never become the slaves of the Spaniards. The Salhanas will drive back the Spaniards from their lands and their hunting-grounds; they will die in the attempt—die to the last man—old men, women, children, all will die, rather than submit to the Spanish yoke.'

" The Falling Rain had no sooner said these words than, going to the door of my hut, I called to me De Brissac.

Madroy, and De Morny. ‘Gentlemen,’ I said, ‘what should you think of men who should repay a generous hospitality by deserting their hosts in the hour of danger? You would say they were cowards, would you not?’

“‘Yes, yes—undoubtedly,’ they all cried. ‘What of it?’”

“‘Why, this. The freedom of our friends, the Salhanas, is menaced. The Spaniards have heard they have rich gold-mines on their lands, and are about to send soldiers to drive them away from their hunting-grounds and the graves of their fathers. Shall we leave them to contend alone against these treacherous Spaniards, or shall we give them our aid?’”

“I need scarcely say what was the answer of my friends. We resolved to stop and fight with and for our Indian allies. When the Falling Rain heard our determination, he was radiant with joy. Even without our aid he doubted not that he and his warriors would repulse the enemy; with our assistance he felt ten times more assured of the victory.

“The Spaniards, although informed that they would be received as enemies should they invade the lands of the Salhanas, still persisted in their design, and marched towards the banks of the Magdalena. They were, in all, about a hundred in number. We advanced to meet them, and drove them back, defeating them shamefully. They left at least thirty dead on the field of battle, and fled precipitately. But even this defeat did not turn them from their purpose. Some weeks afterwards they again advanced in greater numbers, and again we went forth to meet them. This time the battle was longer and more obstinate and bloody on both sides; but, ultimately, we remained as before masters of the field. Unfortunately, one of our

bravest champions—our poor friend, the Baron de Morny—was taken prisoner by the enemy, and dragged away with them.”

“And how long is it,” interrupted Robert Dudley, “since that second battle took place?”

“It is now fifteen days ago.”

“And since that time you have heard nothing of our poor friend?”

“Pardon me, we have heard of him. Oh! trust me, we have not yet abandoned him to his fate. One of our spies, whom we sent to Santa Marta, has returned with the information that the Baron Aloysius de Morny is sentenced to be hanged on the 10th of this month.”

“On the 10th?” said Francis Drake. “Good! I think your friend, then, can be saved, for we can be in Santa Marta before that time.”

“And now, gentlemen,” said Sir Edward, “let us form a council and decide on our course of action. We are all animated with the same desire to revenge ourselves on these perfidious Spaniards, to assist our Indian friends, and to win for ourselves honour and wealth.”

In due course we shall reveal the result of the council, and the means resolved on by the Englishmen, Frenchmen, and the Indians, to punish Don Placido for his treachery.

CHAPTER XXXI.

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP.

IN order to explain how it happened that Don Placido, who was by no means warlike in disposition, determined

on taking by force the lands of the Salliana Indians, it is necessary for us to go back a little in our narrative.

Sometimes on this earth the most trivial causes produce the greatest effects ; it was so in this case. Now, it seems strange, but it is nevertheless true, that had the Baron de Morny not been discovered in the chamber of Donna Florinda de Martinez, Don Placido would never have resolved on going to war with a tribe of inoffensive and peaceable Indians. But so it was.

Don Martinez accidentally made the acquaintance of the Baron on one of the visits of the latter to Santa Marta. Finding that the Baron had plenty of money, and was lavish of it, Don Martinez assiduously cultivated his friendship. He invited him to his house, presented him to his wife, and courted him in every possible way. Nor did he fail to make it pay him well. The Baron de Morny never came to Santa Marta without a very large supply of gold, and very seldom returned to the village of the Sallianas with any at all. Don Martinez always contrived to transfer to himself a goodly share ; and the oftener the Baron visited Santa Marta, the better he was pleased.

The Gascon always brought with him, on his arrival in Santa Marta, not dollars or doubloons, but gold-dust, and lumps of solid gold. These Don Martinez purchased from him, giving him in exchange gold and silver coin, and not failing on each occasion to realize a very large profit ; for the Gascon was careless and extravagant.

Thus it happened that Don Martinez knew that his friend and guest had discovered a very rich gold-mine, and, although he did not know the exact locality, he was aware that it was somewhere on the banks of the river Magdalena.

We have seen how that friendship was so suddenly

brought to a conclusion. The first burst of anger over, Don Martinez began somewhat to regret his precipitancy. In vindicating his marital honour, he feared he might lose a generous and confiding customer—a man who thought no more of gold than of dirt.

No more visits of the Baron to his house, no more gold-dust, no more big lumps ! Don Martinez saw with sorrow his hopes of a rapid fortune dashed to the ground. Still, he hoped that the Baron would return ; then he would contrive to make friends with him again, taking especial care, however, to keep him at a distance from his young wife.

However, one—two—three weeks passed, but the Baron came not. Then a month—then two months ; till at last he finally gave up all hopes of again seeing the liberal Frenchman.

One fine morning, Don Martinez de la Torre requested an audience of Don Placido Ortigoza. He came at once to the point.

“ What will you give me,” he asked, “ if I can point you out a place where gold is as plentiful as dirt ? ”

“ Santo Dios ! ” cried Don Placido ; “ have you, then, discovered a rich gold-mine ? ”

“ No matter ; what share will you give me ? ”

Don Placido thought for a moment, and then replied—

“ If you have indeed discovered a gold-mine, I will give you a third for yourself, another third for me, and the remaining third goes to the coffers of our most gracious King.”

“ It's little King Philip of Spain will ever see or hear of it,” thought Don Martinez. “ However,” he replied : “ be it so ; but I fear that there may be dangers and difficulties in the way.”

"What difficulties?"

"The land where the mine is situated belongs to a tribe of free Indians, with whom we are now at peace."

"But no matter. I will lend you soldiers and labourers. If the Indians offer to prevent you, my soldiers shall drive them off the land."

"Good. How many soldiers will you give?"

"Forty."

"And how many labourers?"

"Sixty."

"Good. I will myself find arms for these latter."

"When do you set out?" asked Don Placido.

"To-morrow," was the reply, "if your soldiers and labourers are in readiness."

"All shall be ready for you. In the meantime, do not you trouble yourself about the Indians. I will send orders to them, not only not to molest you, but to assist you in your search. They will not dare refuse."

Little did Don Placido imagine what a desperate resistance these despised Indians would make to an attempt to despoil them of their land!

* * * * *

We have seen, from the narrative of Sir Edward Dudley, how the Indians and their white allies met and defeated the forces of Don Placido. In the second battle, as we have seen, the poor Baron de Morny was taken prisoner, as he was gallantly fighting in the van. He was taken bound to Santa Marta, and there tried for being found in arms, fighting with the Indians against the Spaniards. He was tried, found guilty, and condemned to be hanged. This execution was fixed for the 8th of February. Don Martinez was one of the council who passed sentence of death on the unfortunate Baron.

On the 7th of February—that is to say, the day previous to the execution—Don Martinez left his house, and proceeded to that of Don Placido ; for he had a notable scheme in his head, by which he hoped to retrieve the disgrace and loss of the two defeats he had suffered at the hands of the Indians.

Scarcely had he left his house, when his young wife, Donna Florinda, also issued forth, attended by her faithful maid Inez. Donna Florinda passed hurriedly through the crowded streets ; so fast, indeed, did she travel, that Inez could scarcely keep pace with her. She turns up a narrow street leading towards the port, and stops about half-way down it, at a dismal and gloomy-looking building. This is the prison of Santa Marta. She rings at the great bell, and when the gaoler appears, hands him a piece of paper, signed at the foot—“Don Placido Ortigoza.” The gaoler, after glancing at the paper, at once throws open the door, and admits the fair young lady. The paper signed by Don Placido is an order to admit the bearer to the cell of the condemned prisoner, the unfortunate Baron Aloysius de Morny. The goaler leads the way, followed by Donna Florinda and Inez. He throws open a ponderous door, and, motioning the lady and her servant to enter, closes it behind them.

They were in the cell of the Baron de Morny. Apparently the Gascon has a clear conscience, for when they entered he was fast asleep. At the noise made by the closing of the great iron door he started to his feet.

The cell, though small, was lofty, and was lit by one small window, at a height of some fifteen or twenty feet from the ground.

De Morny gazed with astonishment on the two females. Still half asleep, he thought he beheld an apparition.

"Aloysius!" murmured Donna Florinda, softly.

"Ah!" he exclaimed joyfully; "then it is not a dream!" and running up to Donna Florinda, he caught her by the hand, saying: "Is it indeed you, sweet Florinda? Do I indeed see you in my prison? Why are you here—why have you come?"

"Why have I come?—I have come to save you."

"To save me? Ah, Donna Florinda, you know not how happy you make me!" replied the amorous Baron, squeezing her hand. "Florinda, my charming Florinda, you then love me still, since you deign sometimes to think of your ——"

"To think of you!" she replied, with a sigh! "ah, yes—always!"

De Morny gazed in her face with a look of such passionate admiration and devotion, that the young woman cast down her head and blushed. At the same time, she could not fail to feel touched. Suddenly arousing herself, she exclaimed—

"Come, Baron, this is no time for love-making. I have come to provide for your escape—to save you from a dreadful doom; for to-morrow you are condemned to die."

These words Donna Florinda said with solemn earnestness.

"Yes, yes; to die—to be hanged. I know all about it," said the Baron, in a light, indifferent tone.

"And yet you can sleep!"

"Sleep—*ma foi!* why not? I should like to know what else there is for me to do in prison?" and the Baron shrugged his shoulders.

Donna Florinda gazed with wonder on the strange being before her; she never could understand him, and now less

than ever. Such a strange mixture of frivolity, timidity, devotion, and bravery ! At times he appeared almost coward ; but again, at other times, he absolutely seemed to ignore danger altogether. He would go round a hundred yards rather than pass near a snarling cur ; and yet here he was sleeping calmly a few hours before the time appointed for his execution.

“ You are not, then, afraid of death ? ” she asked.

“ Afraid—*ma foi* ! what is the use ? I would escape it if I could ; but as I see no chance, I just reason with myself thus :—‘ Baron de Morny,’ I say, ‘ you are condemned to die ; you are in prison, and cannot get out. If you are to die, you must die ; if you are not to die, you will be saved : ’ and then I went to sleep. After all, you see, I took the most sensible course. You have come, you say, to save me—good ! Sleeping or waking, you would have come no sooner and no later ; so you must acknowledge, fair Florinda, that I did wisely.”

Florinda gazed at him with admiration and love beaming from her eyes. In truth, she was very beautiful ; and the Baron might well be excused in falling in love with the fair young dame.

“ And now, sweet lady,” said the Gascon, yawning, for he was still half-asleep, “ how am I to escape ? You say you have come to save me—show me the means.”

Donna Florinda pointed to Inez.

“ You must exchange clothes with my maid here.”

“ Upon my soul,” said the Baron, laughing, “ this is a very pretty performance ! I must exchange clothes with this young lady, must I ? Well, I suppose there is no help for it ; but, indeed, it is rather embarrassing, for in this establishment of mine there is no retiring-room. Well, young lady,” he continued, addressing Inez, “ which

of us is to disrobe first ? It is a matter of perfect indifference to me."

Florinda blushed, but said hastily—

"Come—come, Baron ; this is no time for foolery, or prudish scruples. Your life is at stake ; at any moment the gaoler may return, and then all is lost. Hasten, then, to divest yourself of your apparel, and I will assist my maid to do the same."

De Morny threw off his cloak, and was proceeding to divest himself of his doublet, when a slight noise caused him to cast his eyes upwards to the window. He gave a cry of joy ; Florinda and Inez followed his glance, and gave vent to a shriek of terror ; for they saw at the narrow barred window the form of a half-naked savage.

It was the Bounding Panther. De Morny recognized him at once, and guessed that he had come to deliver him. The Bounding Panther spoke :—

"I am sent to deliver my white brother from captivity—is he ready ?"

"Ready—ready ? Yes, my friend ; this very minute, if you please."

The Panther proceeded to remove one of the bars, which had been already loosened, and lowered the end of a rope into the cell.

"Let my brother climb up quick," he said.

De Morny again put on his cloak ; then, turning to the fair Florinda, he took her hand, saying—

"Charming lady, I leave you now. You perceive that I am not deserted in my extremity. I have two means of escape : one with you, through the door in disguise ; one without you, through the window. I prefer the one through the window. The other way is fraught with

more of danger, both to you and myself, besides, it would necessitate us to leave this young woman in my place, and they might punish her for aiding me to escape. Now adieu !”

He drew the fair Florinda towards him, and imprinted a kiss on her lips. He seized the rope in his hands, and turning round, said, with a smile—

“ You see that the Baron Aloysius de Morny is not quite deserted in his extremity ; love and friendship both come to his assistance. Once again, adieu !”

Then the Baron climbed up the rope, and disappeared through the window.

When Don Martinez, full of the project by which he hoped to discomfit the Indians, and avenge the two disastrous retreats, arrived at the house of Don Placido, he found him at dinner. There were with him his niece, Carminia, a charming and beautiful girl of eighteen, and a young man named Pablo Buanvuelto, who had been some six months domiciled with Don Placido. He came from Spain, and was the private secretary of the Syndic. A few passing words concerning this young man and the fair Carminia.

Don Pablo was three-and-twenty years of age, tall, well-formed and handsome. Carminia was eighteen, and beautiful as an angel. She was ardent, amiable, and impressionable—he was the same ; what wonder, then, that these two young people conceived a passion for each other ?

But, alas ! Don Pablo was as poor as Job, while, on the other hand, Carminia, as the niece of one of the greatest authorities in Spanish America, would one day be possessed of a large fortune ; and, without doubt, her uncle would expect her future husband to possess at least as

much as herself. At present, then, the hopes of the young people were slight indeed ; and, while adoring each other, they dared not even hope.

As we have said, Don Placido was at table when Don Martinez called on him. Gluttony was one of his many faults ; he sat at table long, eat heartily, and drank inordinately. The announcement, then, of Don Martinez, as he was in the midst of his luxurious repast, was far from pleasing to the chief magistrate, and he made a grimace of displeasure.

Still, however, he was anxious, for reasons of his own, not to refuse himself to Don Martinez ; so he bethought himself of an expedient by which he might continue his dinner and yet see his visitor. This was, to invite Don Martinez to join him. Accordingly, a message was sent to the latter, that Don Placido was at dinner, but would be happy for him to join. As Don Martinez was quite as much of a gourmand as his friend, he accepted the invitation gladly, notwithstanding that he had already dined.

Accordingly, he was shown in, and seating himself at the table, he proceeded to do ample justice to the viands. He wisely determined to leave the explanation of the object of his visit till the dessert, and devoted all his attention to the various dishes on the table. The repast finished, the dessert was served, and the negro servants left the room.

“And now, my friend,” said Don Placido, “let me hear what you have to say.”

Don Martinez filled himself a glass of wine, and draining it off, replied—

“I should have entered on my business long ago, but

your hospitality is so bountiful, Don Placido, that I have not hitherto had the opportunity."

Don Placido bowed blandly, and also filled himself a glass of wine.

"Pablo, my friend, will you take any more wine?" he said to his secretary.

The young man declined.

"Carminia, may I offer you any wine—any dessert?"

But Carminia rose, saying—

"No, thank you, uncle. I will go out on the balcony a little, for I find this room too hot. Do you not also feel it so, Don Pablo?"

So saying, Carminia went on to the balcony, casting a glance on Don Pablo from the corners of her eyes, plainly inviting him to follow her. He took the hint, and Don Martinez was left alone with the Syndic.

"Now, Don Martinez, let us hear what you have to say," said the latter, quaffing another glass of wine.

"Don Placido," said Don Martinez, "you are aware that there is in the prison of Santa Marta a certain Frenchman, named the Baron Aloysius de Morny, condemned to be hanged to-morrow morning?"

"Ah, yes—I remember; a foolish fellow, who had the audacity to join the Salhana Indians to fight against us. Well, what of it? To-morrow he will expiate his folly on the scaffold."

"It is to prevent that, Don Placido, that I am here. I have come to ask his life from you."

"To ask for his life?" said Don Placido, in astonishment; "why you were one of the foremost in condemning him to death!"

"I know it; but I have considered the matter over, and repent."

"Repent!" said Don Placido, in still greater astonishment; "why, have you turned soft-hearted in your old age, Don Martinez?"

"Perhaps so—perhaps not; but, at all events, I ask from you his life. Listen to my reasons for so asking, and then decide whether I have reason on my side or not. You are aware, Don Placido," continued the other, "that our two expeditions against the Salhana Indians have been singularly unfortunate—that on each occasion we have been signally repulsed."

"Repulsed!" groaned Don Placido. "Repulsed is not the word; we have been slaughtered, massacred, almost annihilated! Do you know, that out of a hundred and fifty soldiers which the Captain-general of the province allows me for the defence of the town and my private use, there are not fifty fit for service?"

"It is on that very point that I wish to speak with you. Doubtless the Captain-general, when he hears of the slaughter of his soldiers, will be in a great rage; the more so when he hears that they were killed in an attack on the Salhana Indians, with whom we have a treaty. It is extremely probable that he may refuse altogether to grant you more soldiers, unless you can satisfactorily account for these. Now, I have a scheme in my head which I think well worthy of your attention. This Frenchman, this Baron de Morny, who is condemned to die, knows where this gold-mine of which I spoke to you is situated. It was from him that I first learned of its existence. He has himself often told me, that he could, at this mine in question, collect with ease *seven or eight pounds' weight of gold in one day.*"

"But then he is a Gascon," said Don Placido, incre-

dulously ; "and you must not believe all that is said by a Gascon."

"But it happens, my friend, that I have had proof that the Baron spoke the truth. He used frequently to come to Santa Marta, and on these occasions he never failed to bring with him a large supply of gold-dust and of small lumps. I know this, for it was I myself who purchased the gold from him, giving him in exchange gold and silver coin."

"Ah! ah!" said Don Placido, chuckling, "a pretty thing you made of it, I'll warrant, my friend! How much an ounce did you give him for his gold? Not over much, I'll be bound."

"Well, well, I do not complain; I did pretty well as long as it lasted. But that is not the point. This Frenchman knows the exact locality of the mine; let us offer him his life, on condition that he conducts us straight to it; then let a small party of us set out for it by night, so as to avoid the Indians. Once there, we have but to collect a few pounds of the metal and return. We can then show this to the Captain-general, and offer him a share in the wealth which must accrue to all, if he will grant us a large body of soldiers as a protection against the Indians. He will not refuse."

Don Placido mused over this proposition for some time. Certainly it seemed feasible and plausible enough.

"Well, my friend, what do you think?"

"I think, Don Martinez, that you are right."

"Good! Then send a guard of soldiers at once to the gaol, and let us have this Frenchman brought before us."

Don Placido rose to sound on a small silver bell for the purpose; but at that instant Carminia hurried in from the

balcony, looking pale and frightened. She was followed by Don Pablo Buanvuelto, who also looked as if something unusual had occurred.

"Eh—what! Carminia, how pale you are! What is the matter?" asked Don Placido, starting up.

"Speak, Pablo," said the young girl; "for I feel too frightened."

"Senors," said Pablo, "something strange and unusual is passing in the street. We heard a noise and shouting, and peering forth in the darkness, we could just discover a body of men coming down the street; arrived at the sentinel's post, we heard again a noise as of a scuffle, and then again the body of men seemed to advance."

"Oh, doubtless only some of the inhabitants of the town returning home after a merry-making."

"No; it could not have been so, I am sure," said Pablo, confidently.

"Who, then, could they have been?" said Don Placido. "Nonsense, nonsense!—you young people are frightened at your own shadows. At all events, it is easy to see; I will look for myself."

Carminia had closed the door leading on to the balcony behind her. She now threw herself before her uncle as he was about to open it.

"No, no, uncle—do not open it; there is danger. I am sure that I distinguished Indians among the crowd."

"Indians!" said Don Placido, turning pale; "Indians in Santa Marta, and at this hour—impossible!"

Nevertheless, Don Placido did not attempt to open the door, but retreated to his seat. Don Martinez, however, resolved to know the truth, opened the door, and passed out on to the balcony. Leaning his body over, he gazed

out long and carefully into the dark night. Not a soul was visible.

"The street is deserted," he said, re-entering the room ; "there is not a soul to be seen. Your eyes deceived you, Don Pablo."

"Not a soul to be seen !" said the latter ; not even the sentinel !"

"Ha !" exclaimed Don Martinez, "true ; the sentinel was certainly not at his post when I looked out, Don Placido. That, at all events, is strange."

Meanwhile Carminia, with whom, as with all women, curiosity prevailed over fear, had again gone out on the balcony.

"See—see !" she cried ; "there is a bright light yonder—what can it be ?"

They all hurried to the window, and looked forth. Truly enough, a bright flame was seen shooting up to the sky from the plantations to the right of the harbour.

"It is a fire !" exclaimed Don Placido.

"Yes, it is a fire," said Don Martinez ; "and, as I live, it is the house of Don José de Castanares !"

"The house of Don José ?" cried the Syndic ; "but Don José is away. Who could have set fire to his house ?"

"Who knows ?" said Don Pablo. "They say that the Indians hate Don José for his cruelties."

"Oh, uncle !" cried Carminia, almost crying ; "do come in ! I am sure something terrible is about to happen. Send for the soldiers to protect us, for I am certain I saw Indians in the crowd just now."

"The girl is right," said Don Placido, who became more and more uneasy each minute ; "I will send for a

guard. Pablo, Martinez, will you go round to the soldiers' quarters? Ah! but no matter—you had better remain here with me; I will send one of my slaves."

Don Placido advanced to a side-table, on which was a small silver bell. He was about to sound on this, when suddenly the door of the dining-room was burst open, and a group of armed men appeared at the door. These men were Sir Edward Dudley, Robert Dudley, the Chevalier Madroy, the Comte de Brissac, and the Baron de Morny. Behind them were the Salhana chiefs, the Falling Rain, and Bounding Panther.

Neither Don Placido nor Martinez recognized Sir Edward; but seeing among these men the Baron de Morny, whom they supposed in prison, they recoiled in terror. Don Pablo alone retained any firmness or presence of mind. With one hand supporting Carminia, who seemed on the point of fainting, he laid the other on his sword, and demanded, firmly—

"Who are you, senors, and what do you here?"

Sir Edward replied to him—

"Who are we? you ask, senor. We are neither thieves nor robbers, you may rest assured. You ask what we want here? We want something which does not concern you, and we warn you that we will not be hindered or refused."

The tone in which Sir Edward said this was firm without being rude or threatening. De Morny then advanced, and, addressing Don Pablo, said—

"Senor, is not that young lady I see there the Senorita Carminia?"

"You are right," replied Don Pablo, haughtily; "but what is that to you?"

"It is much to me," replied the Gascon, smiling ;
"and I will some day prove that it is so."

Then, turning to the young girl, he said, in a voice which could not be heard by any one save her and Pablo—

"Senorita, did you not procure an order for your friend Donna Florinda to visit an unfortunate Frenchman in prison, who was condemned to die ?"

"Ah ! you, then, know it, sir !" she replied, colouring.

"I know it, fair lady, because I am that Frenchman, and from this day your devoted slave."

So saying, the Gascon bowed profoundly, laying his hand gallantly on his heart.

"Senorita, I was condemned to be hanged by your uncle ; now, I fear much that your uncle will be hanged in my place. Rest assured, however, that not the shadow of harm shall fall on you ; but as to your uncle, his fate rests in the hands of Captain Francis Drake, who will be here anon."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE RANSOM.

ON hearing the words "Francis Drake," Don Placido started and turned pale. While the Baron had been conversing with his niece, the chief magistrate of Santa Marta had been regarding Sir Edward with vague uneasiness. He remembered his features somewhere, and felt sure that he was enemy—either a man who wished to injure him, or a man whom he had injured. At the words "Francis Drake," he suddenly remembered where he had seen him.

The man before him was one of the English adventurers whose property he had confiscated ; the others were his friends. But how came he there, and in company with two Salhana chiefs ? What did they want ? what were their designs ? and how did the Frenchman, whom he believed a prisoner under sentence of death, escape ?

All these questions Don Placido asked himself, but was unable to answer one.

And now the party is increased by a fresh arrival. Scarcely has De Morny finished his speech to Carminia, than Francis Drake, Michael, Will, and Amy also appear on the threshold of the door.

Francis Drake at once came to the point. He was very pale, and regarded Don Placido with a cold, stern glance, which made his blood freeze. He recognized in the man before him the young Captain of the *Enterprise*, whom, six months previously, he had deceived and robbed.

Francis Drake had just come from the house of Don José de Castanares. It was his hand which applied the torch, and set it in flames.

Francis Drake regarded Don Placido, who was crouched up trembling in a corner, with contempt unmingled with pity.

"Don Placido Ortigoza," he said, in a stern, hard voice, "do you remember me ? Yes, I see you do, for you tremble. I am the man whom you so treacherously deceived and robbed ; I am the man whom your worthy friend and accomplice, Don José de Castanares, under the pretence of friendship, sent on a fool's mission to Carthagena, and attempted to have assassinated by the Indian in the forest ; I am Francis Drake, in short, late Captain of the English brig *Enterprise*. As to Don José, the hour for his doom has not yet struck ; at present it is with you,

and with you only, I have to do. Senor Placido Ortigoza, you are before your judges. Prepare, not to defend yourself—for that is impossible—but to answer what questions I please to put to you. Gentlemen, the court is opened.”

Francis Drake took a chair, and seated himself in the centre of the room. He beckoned to the others to follow his example, while the two Indians stood guarding the door.

“Pardon, senors!” blurted out Don Placido, “pardon me! I am innocent of the offences which Don José has committed against you.”

Francis Drake motioned him to hold his peace by an imperious gesture.

“And I, senors,” said Don Martinez—“I have not injured you; I am innocent of any offence. What Don Placido or Don José have done I know not; but I at least have done nothing——”

“Nevertheless,” interrupted the Baron de Morny, in execrable Spanish, “you will do us the favour of remaining where you are. Oh! be easy, my friend; the Senora Florinda has no need of you at present. I have made it my business to attend to her; I have thought of her safety. Trust me, my friend, she is not breaking her heart about you. Do not imagine, my noble Don Martinez, that I will allow to escape so easily you who, but the other day, were so eager to condemn me to be hanged. Ah! I trust the hangman has provided the rope for to-morrow; for it appears to me we may need it yet.”

These mocking words of the Baron overwhelmed Don Martinez with dismay, and he turned pale with terror at the implied threat.

“Senorita,” now said Francis Drake, to Carminia, “if

you wish it, you may retire from the room ; but I warn you that you must not attempt to leave the house."

"Thanks, senor Englishman," replied the young girl, courageously ; "but I have no wish to leave. My place is with my uncle. You said just now you were neither thieves nor assassins—I will wait to see what you really are."

Francis regarded the young girl with admiration. Her spirited reply presented a great contrast to the craven behaviour of her uncle and Don Martinez.

Don Placido, observing the calm demeanour and measured words of the man who had constituted himself his judge, now recovered somewhat his courage.

"Senor," he said, "how long is this farce to last ? and what is the meaning of it ? You have entered my house, having doubtless surprised my servants and the one or two soldiers who were on guard ; but remember that it will be soon morning, and that with morning the inhabitants of this town, and the soldiers from the citadel, will come to my assistance, and then you will have to pay with your life for this outrage. How do you think to escape the punishment which you deserve ? Once again I ask—how long is this farce to last ?"

Francis Drake smiled grimly, and answered—

"A farce, you call it, do you, Don Placido ? You may yet find that it is a tragedy. You are bitterly mistaken, senor, if you fancy this is a farce. As to what you say of the inhabitants of this town coming to your assistance, you may dismiss that from your mind ; I have provided against that. How many houses do you suppose there are in this town of yours, senor Don Placido ?—about two hundred and fifty or three hundred at the most. Well, my

most worthy governor, at the door of each house is stationed one of my seamen, armed to the teeth, with orders to kill instantly any person who attempts to pass out. Behind each of my men there are also two of the Salhana warriors, in case their assistance is needed. Then, as to the soldiers, you may also dismiss them from your mind; for I have attacked and overpowered them. Indeed, they were probably too fatigued by their two battles with the Indians to fight. They did not make the slightest resistance, and are at this moment all safe in the prison of Santa Marta. In addition to these preparations and precautions which I have taken, I have other means in reserve. The whole of Santa Marta is in my power, Don Placido. At a word from me, the town is given up to fire and pillage, and you will be conducted to the gallows."

Don Placido looked incredulous, but nevertheless turned pale at these words.

"It is for you to decide on your own fate," continued Francis Drake. "Your life is in my hands. On certain conditions, it is possible I may not hang you as you deserve."

"And what are these conditions?" said Don Placido.

Although discrediting the statement made by Francis Drake, which he deemed utterly improbable, he nevertheless thought it advisable to gain time. It would soon be morning, and then, doubtless, succour would arrive.

Francis Drake continued—

"You remember, Don Placido, that six months ago you plundered me and my friends of our property?"

"I only acted according to law."

"You lie, sir! If you dare repeat the falsehood, you shall hang in five minutes' time! Did you, or did you not, rob me of my cargo?—yes or no."

Don Placido dared **not** answer "no," so he faltered forth—

"Yes, senor."

"Good! I will take note of your confession. Now for the second accusation I have to bring against you. You were at peace with the Salhana Indians, and, because you were informed that they had a rich mine on their lands, you sent an armed force to drive them away, and take possession of it. I will make you learn, Don Placido, that henceforth the territory of the Salhana Indians shall be held sacred; for they are my friends, and I have both the will and the power to protect them. At your peril, for the future, venture to molest them. Now, answer me—yes or no—did you treacherously, and for the greed of gold, attack a friendly tribe of Indians, protected by treaty?"

Don Placido hesitated.

"Yes or no?" repeated Francis, sternly.

"Yes."

"Good."

Francis Drake arose, and consulted for a few minutes with his companions; then, reseating himself opposite to Don Placido, he again addressed him.

"Don Placido Ortigoza," he said, in a solemn, stern voice, "these are the conditions on which I will consent to spare you from a disgraceful death, and this town from pillage. It wants one hour from daylight; in one hour and a half I require from you the sum of ten thousand doubloons, as a recompense for the cargo which you robbed me of."

"Ten thousand doubloons!" cried Don Placido, aghast. "Where am I to get such a sum?"

"From your strong-box—borrow from your friends—get it where you will—it is not my business; only I swear, that if the money is not delivered to me in one hour and a half, you shall hang like a dog. I swear it by the heaven above us."

Don Placido grew ghastly white at these words. He began to realize the fact that this was no farce, but a stern reality.

"Now for my other conditions. I demand from you also five hundred arquebusses, all in good condition; also fifty barrels of powder, and a thousand pounds' weight of bullets. These I intend to present to the Salhana Indians; it will serve for their defence against the Spaniards for many a year to come. That is all for the present. Don Placido Ortigoza. You have an hour and a half to fulfil the conditions; during that time you can go where you please to procure the money, the arms, and the ammunition, accompanied by a guard of my men, who will shoot you down like a dog if you attempt to escape."

Francis turned away, but a thought striking him, he again addressed the unfortunate Don Placido.

"I do not wish to hang you if I can help it," he said; "and, lest you should doubt my words, I will give you a proof of my power and your helplessness."

So saying, Francis advanced to the balcony, and went forth.

"Gideon, bring Don Placido here," he said.

Gideon, seizing the unfortunate Syndic by the arm, half dragged, half pushed him on to the balcony. Then Francis, taking a pistol from his belt, discharged it in the air.

Instantly following the report of the pistol, there was heard first a distant commotion, which quickly swelled into a loud and terrible shout. Then one by one, torches were lit, till the whole street was one blaze of light. A sailor and two Indians stood before every door ; each one of the Indians carried a torch, which on the report of the pistol he lighted.

And now is heard the tramp of a large body of men, who rapidly approach. Don Placido, gazing out in terror, sees a body of some three or four hundred Englishmen marching along the street. He observes, as they pass, by the light of the torches carried at their head, that every man is armed to the teeth. They march rapidly forward, singing with stentorian voices an English war-song. As Don Placido sees these fierce and wild-looking men, with their gleaming cutlasses and firelocks, he knows that his case is hopeless. If he wanted further confirmation of the fact, it came the next minute ; for immediately following the body of English came an equal number of Salhana Indians, all accoutred for the war-trail. They all halted beneath the window ; and, at a sign from Francis, the singing ceased, and all was quiet.

"Behold, Don Placido ! Look, and doubt now, if you can, whether the town is or is not at my mercy."

The Salhana Indians gazed anxiously up to the balcony on which they were.

"Do you know what those savages are looking at ?" asked Francis, with a scornful smile.

"No, senor," faltered forth, Don Placido.

"They are looking at you."

"At me ?"

"Yes, at you. I have fired a pistol once, and you see the result ; if I again fire, there will ensue another, and a

more terrible result. At the second report of my pistol, a torch will be applied to every house in Santa Marta, and you will be delivered up to the Salhana Indians, whom you wantonly attacked. In one moment after I have fired they will swarm like cats, or rather like tigers, up this balcony, and will seize and drag you down ; for so I have arranged."

Francis Drake placed his hand on a pistol ; the savages bounded forward with gleaming eyes, in expectation of their prey being delivered up to them.

"Shall I fire ?" said Francis, "or will you accept my conditions, and produce the gold, the arms, and the ammunition?"

"For the love of God do not fire !" cried Don Placido, ghastly with terror. "I will give all you ask."

Francis removed his hand from his pistol, and advancing to the front of the balcony, made a sign with his hand. Instantly the savages fell back, the torches were extinguished, and two bodies of men marched on, and in a minute all was still, dark, and silent as the grave.

"This must be indeed a terrible man !" muttered Don Placido. "Even the very savages obey him as if he were a god ! Fool that I was ever to offend such a man !"

"You have one hour and a quarter to comply with my demands, Don Placido," said Francis, calmly ; "at the expiration of that time, you either produce the gold, arms, and ammunition, or you will hang on the gibbet erected for my friend de Morny. Come, gentlemen, the two Indians will see to the safe keeping of Don Placido. I have given them directions."

So saying, Francis Drake, followed by his friends, went out, leaving Don Placido and Don Martinez petrified with terror and astonishment at what they had witnessed

CHAPTER XXXIII.

DON PLACIDO'S DESPAIR.

SILENCE reigned throughout Santa Marta for some time after the departure of Francis Drake from the house of Don Placido. In a few minutes, however, a low murmur was heard, which increased each moment. As the day began to dawn, a few of the inhabitants ventured timidly into the streets, and gazed about in search of their terrible enemy. But the enemy was nowhere visible ; not an Englishman, or even an Indian, was to be seen. What could it mean ? It seemed that they had disappeared as suddenly as they came.

Soon the house of Don Placido was surrounded by the populace, who came to know the meaning of the extraordinary affair of the night. The principal merchants and inhabitants crowded the house, and pressing around its master, sought for an explanation.

But Don Placido was far too much frightened and terror-stricken to give them any satisfaction. He was thinking of his gold — of the ten thousand doubloons which had been demanded of him. He was thinking how he might possibly avoid the payment of the money.

Near him stood, silent and sedate, the two Indian chiefs.

The clamour of the crowd without and the crowd within the house increases ; for none know as yet what has happened, or what may happen.

At last Don Pablo came to the assistance of the chief magistrate, who still seemed buried in a sort of stupor. He mounted the table, and proceeded to explain to the

company in the room the meaning of the affair of the night. He told them that the town had been surprised by two English corsairs, aided by a tribe of hostile Indians; and that the price demanded for not delivering the town to pillage, and the chief magistrate to death, was ten thousand doubloons, and a large quantity of arms and ammunition.

"What shall we do, my countrymen?" cried the young man, as he concluded. "Shall we comply with the demands of the English corsairs? or shall we reply by a volley from our arquebusses?"

For the honour of the Spaniards be it said, they replied to this question by a shout of rage and defiance.

"No, no!" cried several. "Let us fight! Death to the English corsairs!"

"Let us shut up the women and children in a safe place, and go forth to meet them!" cried one.

"Yes, yes—let us attack them, and drive them into the sea!"

But Don Martinez now spoke; and what he said considerably cooled the ardour of those who wished to fight.

"Let us fight, gentlemen," he said. "Very good: if you wish it, I, for one, will fight; but let us first consider the chances we have—the forces we have at our disposal, and those at the disposal of the enemy. In the first place, have you thought on the consequences of an engagement with the English? If they defeat us, the town will be delivered up to fire and sword. How many men do you suppose we have fit to bear arms? Certainly not more than five hundred; and these are all undisciplined, and unaccustomed to arms, while the Englishmen are very devils to fight, all strong, fierce-looking men, and armed

to the teeth ; for I marked the corsairs well as they marched past the house. Then we have no soldiers ; for they were all overpowered, disarmed, and placed in the gaol. The prison is close to the port, so that to release them, we should first have to defeat the English. Then, as to the arms : we have but few, for the English have seized all they found in the citadel. And, lastly, I wish to remind you of another fact, which you seem to have forgotten. The two English ships which brought these corsairs here are lying in the harbour, at an easy distance from the town ; they each carry many cannon, for I can see them from the balcony. It would, then, but be the work of a few moments to lay the town in ashes. That is how the case stands : we are some five hundred badly-armed, undisciplined men, against seven or eight hundred well-armed, well-disciplined men, inured to hardships and danger. And these English are no joke, I can tell you, to contend against ; they fight stubbornly, determinedly, like very demons. And in addition to this, there are the two war-ships, with their cannon. Now, gentlemen, you have the true state of the case."

A murmur went round the assembly at these words.

"It would be madness !" cried several.

"We should only be exposing ourselves uselessly, and delivering up the town to pillage," said others.

"I am for complying with the demands of these corsairs," continued Don Martinez. "Five hundred arquebusses and some ammunition—what is that ? We can soon procure more from Carthage. And ten thousand doubloons—it is a large sum, certainly ; but even the payment of that is better than the destruction of our town."

"Ten thousand doubloons !" muttered Don Placido. "Where shall I procure it ? It will be the ruin of me !"

"And will it not be the ruin of you if you are hanged in an hour's time, as the captain of the corsairs threatened?" asked Don Martinez. "Do you prefer that the town should be given up to pillage, and you to the gibbet?"

"But it is not fair that I should pay all. I am willing to pay my share—say one thousand doubloons," said Don Placido, who had now somewhat recovered from his stupor.

But the whole history of the affair had now got wind; and the citizens now learned that the pirate captain was the same as he whose cargo Don Placido had confiscated six months previously.

"Bah!" said a merchant; "it is but just that you should pay all. Had it not have been for you, Don Placido, this would never have happened; had you not have seized on the cargo of the English ship which arrived here six months previously, they would not have sought this vengeance on the town."

"True," cried another; "all this trouble is brought on us by Don Placido—it is right that he should bear the loss."

"Yes, yes!" was now heard on all sides; "Don Placido is rich, let him pay."

"Yes, yes—I will pay," cried Don Placido, seeing that all were against him; "I will pay, if necessary. But where are the English corsairs—are they still in the town?"

"No; they have left the town, and await on the quay."

"Ah! then why need we pay at all? Call out the soldiers—send to the Captain-general at Carthagená for assistance. Why should we pay, since we are no longer in danger?"

"Senor," said Don Pablo, "the corsairs have left the

town, it is true ; but they are all gathered together on the quay. They are ready, drawn up in battle array, with their arms in their hands, again to precipitate themselves upon the town, if necessary. The guns of their two war-ships are also pointed towards us. As for the soldiers, they are all disarmed and imprisoned ; so that, for the present, our chance is hopeless."

The countenance of Don Placido again fell at this news.

"Well," he said, in doleful accents, "I suppose there is no help for it. Go, senors, and provide the arms and ammunition ; I will try and find the gold. Ten thousand doubloons ! Alas ! I am a ruined man !"

Then all left the room but Don Pablo, Don Martinez, and Carminia. Don Placido seated himself, and once again gave way to grief and despair at the thought of his ten thousand doubloons. He remained with his face buried in his hands for fully half an hour ; then Don Pablo, touching him on the shoulder, roused him from his fit of grief.

"It wants but little more than a quarter of an hour of the time appointed by the English corsair," he said.

"Time ! what appointed time ?" said Don Placido, as if in a dream.

"Why, the time by which you were to produce ten thousand doubloons, senor."

"Ah ! yes, I remember," said Don Placido, with a sigh ; "I suppose it must be done ; but I am a ruined man. May Satan confound him and all his countrymen ! Oh, if Don José de Castanares were only here, then we would see ! Ah ! there would then be a fight, indeed ; for Don José is brave, and the English corsair hates him like the fiend."

"Hates him—why so ?" asked Don Pablo.

Don Placido was about answering ; but happening to cast his eyes on his niece Carminia, he suddenly checked himself.

Then he lowered his voice, and said something in a low tone.

"Ah!" he chuckled, "now you see why Don José would be obliged to fight as much for us as himself!"

Don Pablo gave vent to an exclamation.

"Oh, but this is infamous!" he cried. "Now I understand why the English corsair burned down Don José's house; now I understand why he hates him so bitterly! And you say, senor, that you wish Don José were here? If Don José were here to-day, the English would kill us with him, without mercy; and they would be right."

"Eh! what—what is that you say, Pablo?" cried Don Placido, angrily. "What do you mean?"

At this moment the clatter of arms was heard in the court-yard below. The citizens were bringing in the arquebusses demanded by the corsair.

This reminded Don Placido of the unwelcome fact that he had to provide ten thousand doubloons in gold.

With a deep groan, he arose.

"Come, Pablo—come with me to my vaults. My curse on the corsairs: they have ruined me! Come, let us get the gold, and finish this affair, as there is no help for it."

So saying, the chief magistrate of Santa Marta went out with his secretary, and descended the vaults where he kept his treasure, in order to comply with the imperative demand of the Englishman—a demand which he dared not disregard or even postpone, for he felt that from Francis Drake he might expect no mercy, did he fail to comply implicitly and at once with the conditions.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

FIRE AND SWORD.

THE English corsairs and their Indian allies were assembled in a group on the quay of Santa Marta, awaiting the arrival of the ransom for the captured town.

The singular success which had attended their audacious attempt was due in a great measure to the skill and forethought of their young commander ; and also, in a less degree, to favouring circumstances.

One fact was peculiarly advantageous to them. Usually the harbour of Santa Marta contained at the least some twenty Spanish vessels, the crews of which would have been powerful auxiliaries to the townspeople ; but on this occasion the port was absolutely deserted. With the exception of two small vessels undergoing repairs, there were none in port, neither merchantmen nor war-ships.

A few minutes before the time appointed by Francis Drake, Don Placido appeared approaching the quay. Before him went two negroes, carrying a heavy chest ; behind him, marching in stolid silence, were the two Salhana Indians whom Francis had appointed as his guards. Behind these, again, came many of the inhabitants of the town, bearing among them the arms and ammunition demanded ; while, last of all, followed a crowd of women and children bringing up the rear.

"Here comes Don Placido with the ransom," said Sir Edward Dudley. "It appears, after all, that this affair is to end without bloodshed."

"I rejoice at it," replied Francis ; "for I prefer to fight these Spaniards at sea, on equal terms. I like not having to attack a town filled with women and children."

Don Placido advanced sorrowfully and slowly towards the corsairs—so slowly, indeed, that the foremost of the inhabitants behind had almost to push him onwards.

Arrived before the captain of the corsairs, he made a sign to the negroes, who deposited the chest of gold on the ground at his feet.

“Captain Francis Drake,” he said, with a deep sigh, “here is the gold which you ordered me to procure, and here are the arms and ammunition.”

“Very good, Senor Ortigoza ; it is well for your sake that you have thought proper to obey my demand.”

Then, turning to the men who were grouped around, he said, pointing to the chest of gold—

“My boys, this is for you ; take it and divide it equally among you.”

The sailors replied by a shout of delight, and dragging the box away, prized open the lid, and were soon busy distributing the bright Spanish doubloons.

“My brothers,” continued Francis to the Indians, “the arms and ammunition are for you. Don Placido makes you a present of them, as a recompense for his unwarranted and treacherous attack. Is it not so, Don Placido ?”

Don Placido bowed in silence.

“He gives them to you, with the promise never again to attack or molest you or your lands. Is it not so, Don Placido ?”

“The Salhanas have my word,” replied Don Placido.

Francis Drake could have replied, had he chosen—

“They had your word before, and it was treacherously broken.”

But those who are successful can afford, in the hour of victory, to be generous.

Loud cries of joy broke from the Indian warriors as

they proceeded to take possession of the arms and ammunition. No present could have been more acceptable to them, or more disastrous to the Spaniards, should they again resolve, in spite of their word, to attack them. The arms were more than sufficient for the whole tribe, and the ammunition would, with care, last them for years.

Among the inhabitants at the rear of Don Placido might have been seen Carminia his niece, leaning on the arm of Don Pablo. Amy, in her pretty sailor's dress, left her brother's side, and going over to the young Spanish girl, was soon engaged in conversation. It appeared that the two young girls had rapidly struck up a friendship ; for, although neither understood more than a word or two of the other's language, their smiles and gestures evidenced as much.

"Amy !" cried Francis, missing his sister, and not seeing her with Carminia.

Amy, pressing Carminia's hand, hastened away to where her brother was standing looking around uneasily for her. She had but joined him, when Carminia, who had followed her, called her attention by touching her on the shoulder. Carminia, taking a bracelet from her wrist, said some words in Spanish, with a bright smile on her beautiful face.

"What is it she says, Sir Edward ?" asked Amy.

"She begs that you will accept the bracelet she holds in her hand, in memory of her."

"Ah, yes !" replied Amy ; "that I will gladly do."

Then she held out her hand, and the Spanish maiden fastened on the trinket.

"Tell her, Sir Edward," said Amy, that I thank her much, and will not forget her or her kindness."

Carminia acknowledged Amy's thanks with a smile ;

and then these two young girls, neither of whom understood the other's language, and who a few minutes before were strangers, embraced each other, and, each in her own tongue, swore an eternal friendship.

* * * * *

To the brave, vengeance on the weak is hateful ; therefore, after the implicit and complete obedience with which Don Placido had met his demands, Francis Drake hastened to make preparations to evacuate Santa Marta and leave the inhabitants in peace. Having given orders to his sailors to embark, he turned towards Don Placido, and said —

“Senor Don Placido, you are well out of this affair—you have only suffered in purse. But there is another man who shall render a far different account to me. When you see Don José de Castanares, do not forget to tell him who it was that burned his house ; and tell him that he shall die at my hands.”

Many of the English sailors had now re-embarked, while the others were waiting the return of the boats to be taken off to the ships. Before finally leaving the shore, Francis Drake advanced to the body of Indian warriors, his allies, in order to bid them, for the present, farewell. The Falling Rain, in the name of his warriors, replied.

“Thanks to you, brother,” he said, “and your white warriors, we are left free men in our forests and villages, for the Spaniards have sworn to molest us no more. Thanks to you, also, should they again wish to break their word, we have arms and ammunition wherewith to combat and defeat them. Between you and us—your people and our people—let there be an eternal friendship. We leave you now, but on the day when you have need of our help, we will come at the first summons.”

"Thanks, brave brother," replied Francis; "I hear your promise with joy, and should necessity arise, will not fail to take advantage of it."

Then he bade them adieu, shaking the Falling Rain and the bounding Panther cordially by the hand. After Francis, Robert Dudley, Sir Edward, and the three Frenchmen also did so. It was arranged that they should all again pay a visit to the Indian village, in order to bring away the gold they had left there under their charge, and also to return to the marvellous grotto of precious stones which Robert Dudley had shown them. Then the Indians, at a sign from their chiefs, disappeared in the forest, and the English hastened to their boats.

As the last men were about crowding in, suddenly there rang forth on the morning air a terrible shout—a yell as of a thousand demonds. That terrible cry came from the town.

The men leaped from the boats, and stood gazing in surprise towards the town whence it came. Again and again the infernal yell rang forth, mingled now with the shrieks of women and children, the report of fire-arms, and the groans and shouts of men.

Francis stood still and listened.

"Good heavens! what is that?" he exclaimed, in astonishment. "There appears to be a terrible combat going on in the town."

"Some quarrel among the Spaniards, I suppose," said Sir Edward Dudley. "What a terrible shouting they make, to be sure! I suppose having got rid of us, they are now venting their rage upon one another."

Again the terrible yell which they had first heard rang forth.

"No," cried Robert Dudley, who had been listening

attentively ; “I know that cry—it is the war-whoop of the Ottamanko Indians. Bereft of their arms, their soldiers in the prison, the unfortunate Spaniards are attacked by the most savage and merciless tribe of Indians in South America.”

As he spoke, they saw running towards them an Indian ; it was the Bounding Panther. In a few words he confirmed Robert Dudley’s speech—the town was attacked by Ottamankos.

Informed, doubtless by their spies, that the English and the Salhanas had seized and disarmed the town, they had waited in the woods for the departure of the conquerors, and then, in their turn, had thrown themselves into the defenceless town, pillaging, slaughtering, and murdering.

“What says my brother ?” asked the Indian of Francis. “He has granted peace to the Spaniards ; will he allow them to be attacked by others—by the Ottamankos, his enemies ?”

The noise, the shouting, the yells, and the crash of arms, became more deafening every moment. Cries of rage, despair, and agony were borne on the wind, mingled with the terrible war-whoop of the Ottamankos.

“Shall we allow these unfortunates to be slaughtered ?” he asked of his companions.

“No, no !” cried all, with one voice ; “let us to the rescue !”

Then, addressing the sailors, who had left the boats, and now, with their arms in their hands, crowded round their commander for orders—

“Come on, my boys !” he cried, with a loud voice. “The Spaniards are our enemies, it is true ; but they are Christians like ourselves. Let us, then, like brave men, give them our aid against pagan savages.”

A loud shout greeted these words of the young captain, and the sailors ranged themselves in order of battle, and waited but the word to dash into the town to the assistance of their late enemies.

How extraordinary are the workings of the human heart! These same men, who a few hours previously would have slaughtered the Spaniards without mercy had they resisted, now prepared to rush to their assistance, waiting impatiently for the word from their young commander.

At this moment a number of the inhabitants appeared in sight; they were being driven in confusion from the town before a superior force of savages. Most of the Spaniards were unarmed, not having time to search for the few arquebusses left in the town before they were attacked by the Ottamankos. Dreadful was the slaughter; the Indians had complete possession of the town, and the women and children were at their mercy. The shrieks and cries of these latter might now be heard above the din of battle.

“Forward, my boys!” cried Francis Drake to his men.

Then the English marched forward to meet the body of flying Spaniards and pursuing savages. Onwards they went, not confusedly or in disorder, but in a serried phalanx, marching shoulder to shoulder, with their muskets cocked, ready to deliver their fire at the word of command.

The Spaniards, driven back in headlong confusion, were soon behind the advancing body of Englishmen, whom they avoided in terror, thinking that they were again advancing to attack them, and that it was a prearranged plan between them and the Indians, first to disarm the town, and then to deliver it up to fire and sword. But

no sooner were the Spaniards in their rear flying in dire confusion towards the sea, than the Ottamankos were made aware that they had other enemies now to contend with than badly-armed, panic-stricken inhabitants, unaccustomed to war. Many of the English had gone on board the ships, and had not yet had time to return to the assistance of their comrades. Thus it happened that the body of yelling savages outnumbered them nearly three to one.

On came the Indians, yelling, shouting, and flourishing their arms. They seemed inclined to avoid the compact body of Englishmen, and pursue the dispirited Spaniards. But this did not meet the approval of Francis Drake.

"Now boys, steady—aim low," he said.

The muskets of his sailors were raised as with one motion.

"Fire!"

A deadly volley poured forth from their levelled barrels, and the bullets tore and whistled through the ranks of the Ottamankos, creating terrible havoc. The Indians hesitated, and fell back in terror at the sight of the advancing Englishmen, who, after delivering their fire, rushed to the attack.

"Load your guns again," cried Francis Drake, as he perceived that his men were about to rush on the savages with empty muskets.

This was a wise precaution, for a second body of Indians, as numerous as the first, now appeared, coming from the town to the assistance of their comrades. This reinforcement rushed towards the small body of English with wild and terrible yells. But another well-directed volley checked their ardour, and now at least forty savages were stretched on the ground, weltering in their blood. For

an instant the savages paused, and seemed inclined to seek safety in flight ; but seeing the small number of their adversaries, and encouraged by their chiefs, they again rushed to the attack, and advanced yelling and shouting. The English did not wait for them, but with a loud cheer met them half way.

Now began a terrible hand-to-hand combat. Cutlasses clashed and glittered in the morning sun, and the clubbed muskets of others did terrible execution among the Indians. The latter, however, were at least three to one, and, still fighting desperately, the corsairs were compelled to fall slowly back. The ground was encumbered with the dead and dying as they retreated step by step. Again and again the Indians threw themselves on the little band, striving to break through their ranks ; again and again they were beaten back, leaving numbers of their warriors with skulls and bones crushed by the clubbed muskets of the sailors, which they used with terrible effect.

Now, however, the Indians commenced a galling fire of arrows, to which the English could make no effective reply ; for it took all their exertions to keep the infuriated savages from breaking their ranks, so that they had no opportunity of reloading their pieces. The situation was becoming critical, for each moment brought fresh savages to the attack, while the brave English were suffering under a galling fire of arrows, which, though they seldom inflicted mortal wounds, were exceedingly galling and painful.

Now, however, a fresh body of sailors, who, seeing their comrades' danger, had landed from the ships, advanced to their assistance. With an encouraging shout they rushed forward, and, opening their ranks to allow those to pass through who had discharged their pieces, they ranged themselves in front, and delivered another crushing volley.

Those first engaged had now an opportunity of reloading, and, advancing in turn, they poured in so terrible a fire that the Indians, despite their numbers, fell back in confusion.

Now, too, they were joined by the Spaniards, who perceived with gratitude and joy that the English, instead of being their foes, were their friends. A few more crushing volleys, and then Englishmen and Spaniards in turn attacked the savages, throwing themselves upon them with a loud shout, and with irresistible fury. The Indians fell back in disorder, and their retreat was soon converted into a flight.

Some seventy or eighty of their warriors were now stretched on the ground, and the remainder fled in confusion back into the town, from which might still be heard the shrieks of the women and children, bearing evidence to the fact that others of them were engaged in the work of pillage and murder.

Francis Drake, waving his sword, led the way in pursuit of the flying Ottamankos. Following close at their heels into the town, a terrible scene met their view; the houses in the principal street were many of them on fire, while groups of terrified women and children might be seen flying in terror from the savages, who pursued them, and endeavoured to carry them off with them into the woods.

Turning his head for a moment, to satisfy himself that his men were following him, Francis saw, to his horror, that the gentle Amy was close beside him.

“Amy, Amy! will you never learn wisdom? Go back—this is no place for you. Gideon,” he cried to the Cornishman, whom he espied as he rushed on to the attack, wielding an enormous ship’s axe—“Gideon, come

here, and **do** not leave my sister for a moment till she is in a place of safety."

Gideon obeyed, and prepared to conduct the young girl to the rear out of danger ; but she resolutely refused to leave the scene. Francis, now thinking that Gideon would see her in safety, again rushed on, half maddened by the pitiful shrieking of the women and children in the town.

"Gideon, Gideon!" cried Amy, "I will not go. See!—look there! there is Don Placido's niece, who gave me the bracelet. See—she is attacked by an Indian! Save her! oh, save her!"

Gideon looked, and saw a tall Ottamanko warrior about to attack Don Pablo, who stood defending Carminia, with one arm round her waist.

"Humph!" growled Gideon; "it's a brave lad—let's see him kill this naked savage."

But, unfortunately, things did not turn out as the Cornishman expected; for, embarrassed by Carminia, Don Pablo could not cope with the savage. His sword was dashed from his hand by the tomahawk of his enemy, and the next moment he was stretched bleeding on the ground.

Carminia shrieked wildly as she saw her brave defender fall, and fainted. Then the Indian, taking her insensible form in his arms, dashed off up a side street, and plunged into the wood at a run.

"Save her—save her, good Gideon!" cried Amy, wildly.

Gideon, giving a grunt of dissatisfaction, dashed off in pursuit; and Amy watched with tearful eyes the retreating forms of the savage with Carminia and the Cornishman. Sir Edward Dudley also started off in pursuit.

The Indian, encumbered by his burden, could not run as fast as Gideon, who gained on him at every step. He could hear the hoarse gruntings and puffings of the Cornishman behind him, and, aware that he must be overtaken, suddenly threw down his burden, and turned to defend himself. Gideon had thrown aside his musket and cutlass, in order to run the better. The savage gave a smile of satisfaction and contempt, as he saw the unarmed Englishman come tearing towards him. Gideon never halted in his course for one moment, but dashed full at the savage. This latter raised his tomahawk, and aimed a terrible blow at Gideon as he rushed on him ; Gideon received it on his arm, the weapon inflicting a severe wound. The next moment, and he had closed with his enemy. He flung his great brawny arms around the naked body of the savage, who in that terrible grip was helpless as a child. For one moment he struggled desperately : but Gideon, putting his whole strength in the effort, compressed the body of his victim by such a dreadful bear-like hug, that the Indian's ribs crushed in like basket-work. The next moment he opened his arms, and his enemy fell helplessly to the ground, the blood gushing in torrents from his mouth ; he rolled over on his face, giving but one deep groan, and all was over.

" Ah ! bah ! " said the victor contemptuously to his master, who had arrived ; " such naked vagabonds as that are hardly worth one's trouble ; it's no more trouble than wringing the neck of a fowl. The fool ! to think that with his bit of a tomahawk he could stand against me ! "

" Nevertheless, I see you are wounded, " said Sir Edward ; " so lift up the young lady, and let us get back to the town, and have your hurt attended to. "

"It is nothing," grumbled Gideon. "It was my own fault; the naked vermin could never have touched me, had I chosen to prevent it."

Then he took the still insensible form of Carminia in his arms, and carried her back to the town, from which the savages were flying in every direction, pursued by the victorious English.

Don Pablo was not severely wounded; and, on seeing that Carminia was saved, he gave a cry of joy; then, taking her from the arms of Gideon, he laid her tenderly on the ground, and sought by every means in his power to restore her to consciousness. Nor were his efforts unsuccessful, for in a few minutes the young girl opened her eyes, and gazed around her.

In the meantime the Ottamankos had been driven, to the last man, from the town, leaving half of their number dead or dying behind them. Many of the Spaniards, too, had been slain, and among them, sad to relate, some women and children.

With the exception of those who were tending the wounded, and others who performed the last offices for the dead, all the inhabitants of Santa Marta were gathered around the brave English, who had befriended them in their hour of need.

Don Martinez, to whom it is but due to say, that during the conflict he comported himself as a brave man, advanced towards Francis Drake, who was at the head of his men.

"Senor Corsair," he said, bowing profoundly, "you have this day proved that your generosity is equal to your courage. How can we repay you for the great service you have rendered us? Name your price, and, on behalf of

myself and townspeople, I will answer that it shall not be refused."

"Return to your dwellings, attend to your wounded, and bury your dead," replied Francis; "we wish for no reward."

An hour later, in spite of the earnest solicitations of the Spaniards, who would have been willing to keep their brave defenders and late enemies for ever in the town, the English left the town, and once again embarked on board the ships.

It was near noon ere all the English were again on board the two ships, the *Nemesis* and the *Avenger*. The anchors are quickly weighed, the sails set, and once more before the western breeze the English corsairs sail out to sea. As long as they are in sight, a group of the inhabitants remain on the quay, waving their handkerchiefs, and wishing God speed to these men, who were at once their conquerors and their saviours.

Robert Dudley and the three Frenchmen were on board the brig the *Nemesis*, while Francis and Sir Edward were on board the *Avenger*.

Merrily the two ships dashed along before the fresh breeze. It was a beautiful afternoon; the sea was just ruffled by the breeze without being rough, and the heat of the afternoon sun was mitigated by the cool wind, and awnings which had been spread for the purpose. Francis, Sir Edward, and Amy were on the high poop of the frigate, enjoying in the cool shade of the evening the soft refreshing breeze. It was hard to realize, in the bright sunshine, the blue sky, and blue ocean, ruffled by a thousand little waves, that they had but a few hours previously passed through such a scene of horror and bloodshed.

"How beautiful, smiling, and peaceful the sea, the sky,

and all nature appears!" said Sir Edward to Francis. "How different from the scene of noise and bloodshed we have witnessed!"

"Ah! was it not dreadful?" said Amy, shuddering. "I declare it made me quite sick!"

"Well, little one," said her brother, as he gazed listlessly out into the sea, "at all events, we may calculate on having the remainder of the day in peace. Surely fortune has in store for us some little rest and quietness, after such a bloody morning's work!"

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE CORSAIRS' NEST.

FRANCIS DRAKE now wished for some place where he could land his crew, and enjoy some respite from his exciting labours. But there were difficulties in the way.

In the first place, where should he find an asylum in an enemy's country? At all the ports on the Spanish Main the authorities would have been doubtless apprised of his attack on Santa Marta, and his depredations at sea. Doubtless at each port there would be a body of troops, and perhaps several war ships. At Santa Marta itself, after the service he had rendered the inhabitants by defeating the Indians, they would doubtless receive him with open arms. But would it be safe to venture into the port with the *Avenger* and the *Nemesis*, after the capture and plunder of the Spanish galleon, which would soon be known throughout the whole of South America?

Fortunately, Robert Dudley was able to relieve him

from the difficulty. During his stay with the Salhar Indians, he had become well acquainted with the country; he offered to conduct Francis Drake to a creek in the Gulf of Darien, where the *Avenger* would be alike hidden from man, and sheltered from the winds and waves.

Francis Drake gladly accepted this offer, and, following the directions of Robert Dudley, the two vessels safely arrived there. He found that the creek possessed all the advantages promised. It was in every respect a fitting nest for that terrible sea-bird, a corsair.

The creek or inlet to which Robert Dudley had conducted him, was, as we have before stated, situated in the Gulf of Darien, at a distance of about sixty miles from Santa Marta. It was some two miles up the river, and was completely screened from observation. A whole fleet of vessels might pass up the river, while another fleet might be lying hidden in the inlet. The entrance to it was narrow and tortuous; so much so, indeed, that not more than one vessel could pass in at a time. When once, however, the narrow channel was threaded, there was a large open basin, capable of holding twenty large ships. This basin was surrounded on all sides by high precipitous rocks.

There was but one pass out of this place—a narrow gully, which a mountain stream had worn in the rocks. The place was admirably adapted by nature, both for concealment and—in case of discovery by enemies—for defence.

In this secure retreat the two vessels were moored, perfectly concealed from all but those who knew the secret of the retreat.

In the rocks surrounding the inlet there were several caves of different dimensions. Francis took advantage of

these, and, completing the work which nature had begun, caused them to be further excavated and hollowed out, until, after several days' labour, a tunnel was formed, leading to a large subterranean chamber. This he determined to use as a store-room, and landed a considerable quantity of arms, ammunition, and treasure.

He also brought on shore, and fixed in commanding positions on each side of the narrow passage, some of the largest ship's guns. Thus the entrance was completely protected from the assaults of enemies, even should they succeed in discovering it. Francis Drake calculated that, with the two ships and their crews, he could successfully defend the place against any force the Spaniards could bring.

Here, then, the corsairs rested, and employed themselves in adding to the natural defences of their hiding place. The cave was put in a state of thorough repair; the floor was levelled, and spread with dry sand, and the hidden passage was enlarged, and made sufficiently commodious to enable it to be used with comfort.

The cave was now filled with the spoils of the Spanish ships they had plundered—with arms, powder, and all manner of warlike stores. All around the creek, too, at intervals of a few yards, cannon were mounted; so that even should an enemy force his way past the defences at the entrance, he would be exposed to a terrible fire from the rocks around.

The brushwood and trees immediately on the banks of the creek were all cleared away, and in several parts artificial landing-places were formed. The sailors, too, under the direction of Michael, with great labour constructed a dock, in which either of the ships could, if damaged, be repaired. Altogether, the place was put into such a con-

dition, as to be in reality a strongly-fortified harbour, with great natural advantages, so improved by art, as to be a most secure retreat for the corsairs.

Nor had Francis Drake been idle. He had made his way across the valley, and with great toil had ascended the mountains bounding it. But if the toil of the ascent was great, he was fully rewarded by the sight which met his eyes when he had gained the summit. To the east he saw the fertile expanse of the valley he had traversed, while far away in the distance were the blue waters of the Atlantic Ocean. He could discern far away on his right the Spanish town of Carthagena, and here and there, on the broad expanse of the ocean, the white sails of a ship going or returning to one of the ports of Spanish America. But if the sight which met his gaze to the east excited his admiration, on turning towards the west his astonishment was unbounded, for he saw lying before him, in all its calm majesty, the vast waters of the Pacific Ocean. The mountain on whose summit he now was, was situated nearly in the centre of the Isthmus of Panama. Francis Drake had been the first to ascend it, and his enterprize was well rewarded; for he was the first to discover that only a narrow strip of land separated two vast and distinct oceans—a discovery second only to that of the New World. With that singular prescience only given to great minds, he at once conjectured that there must be a passage to the southward of this new ocean. Nor was he wrong; for shortly afterwards the southern continent of America was rounded by the Straits of Magellan and Cape Horn, and Peru, Chili, Bolivia, and California, with all their wealth, resources, and treasures were discovered.

Francis Drake cut a pole with a hatchet from a small tree on the mountain, and, fixing it firmly in the ground,

he nailed to the top a small English flag which he brought with him. The emblem of English dominion fluttered in the breeze, Francis Drake gazed proudly around him, a flush came to his cheek, and his eye sparkled. Apostrophizing the flag, he said :—

“Wave on, emblem of old England, my glorious country, planted there, in view of the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, by Francis Drake, an obscure adventurer—a corsair! You shall yet wave over all America, and the flaunting flag of Spain shall disappear before the glories of the Union Jack!”

So saying, and casting one more glance around on the valley and the two oceans, he commenced to descend the mountain, and regained his companions without further adventure.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE THREE SHIPS.

FRANCIS DRAKE determined to return to the spot where he had planted the flagstaff with a party from the creek ; he determined to build a fort on the very summit of the mountain, and leave in charge of it one of his brothers, with some ten or a dozen sailors.

Accordingly, after having rested for a couple of days, Francis Drake again set forth, with Will, Robert Dudley, and a party of sailors, for the mountain top.

After two days and a half of toil, they found themselves at the summit. Erecting a tent which they had brought with them, they waited to recover their strength and rest themselves before setting to work. On the next day,

under the direction of Francis, they commenced to build a log hut. This they completed in less than a week. They then proceeded to erect a large flag-staff, in place of the small one on which Francis had first hoisted the British flag.

This was not done without an object, or merely to hoist the British ensign. The summit of the mountain commanded a clear view for many a mile around. To the east the waters of the Atlantic were spread out like a sheet before their gaze, to the south were the prairies and pampas of the New World, while to the west lay in calm repose the mighty Pacific Ocean. Francis Drake at once perceived the advantage of such an elevated station in his war against the Spaniards ; for, perched on this eminence, a man on the look-out could discover every vessel which approached or left any of the Spanish ports. The advantage of this could not be overrated ; and accordingly he determined to make the best of it, by establishing a code of signals. Thus, when a vessel was perceived by those on the look-out on the mountain, he arranged that certain flags should be hoisted in a certain manner, and in certain order ; these, when deciphered, would inform the corsairs in the retreat as to the fact that a vessel was in sight, the direction she was sailing in, and all other necessary particulars.

A vigilant look-out was constantly kept from the entrance to the underground communication to the cave.

A week elapsed, during which the crews of the two English ships were employed in still further strengthening the position. At the expiration of this time, one fine morning, immediately after sunrise, the English corsairs were thrown into a state of the greatest excitement by the dull report of a cannon, apparently proceeding from the

other side of the precipitous rocks. This was the signal which Francis Drake had ordered to be made, when the man on the look-out observed flags on the flag-staff on the mountain.

Francis Drake, Sir Edward Dudley, and Robert, hastily traversed the passage, and passed on to the platform. Looking out towards the signal-post, they could discern that several flags were hoisted. Francis, who had arranged the code of signals to be used, took a telescope, and hastened to decipher them.

"Two vessels are in sight," he said, after some little time. "They are steering to the westward, and consequently, are bound from America to Spain. Probably they are laden with treasure. Come, let us put to sea, and intercept them."

They hurried back to the cavern, and Francis Drake gave orders for the crews of both vessels to go on board and weigh anchor. The wind was very light, so they were towed out of the inlet by the boats. Once outside, there was sufficient wind to fill the sails; and the boats being hoisted up, the two corsair ships gave chase to the two sail, now plainly visible in the offing.

Some twenty sailors were left at the inlet, in charge under a subordinate officer. Anxiously they watched the receding vessels, until they could distinguish nothing but two white specks on the horizon. Towards evening they heard the sound of a distant cannonade, and knew that the combat had commenced. Soon after dark they could hear the thundering of the distant guns. About ten o'clock it ceased; then they knew that the battle was over, but which were the victors?

All through the long night they remained in suspense; but at the first dawn of day this was happily dissipated

and they beheld approaching the creek with the favouring gale three vessels, one of which, disabled and dismasted, was in tow of the others.

This vessel was a captured Spanish galleon ; the other two, we need scarcely say, were the *Avenger* and the *Nemesis*. After an obstinate fight of several hours, they had, as before, totally defeated the Spaniards ; and having transferred all the prisoners on board one of the galleons, they had taken the other in tow, and sailed in triumph for the "Corsairs' Nest."

Arrived at the mouth of the inlet, the boats were lowered, and the three vessels towed in ; for the wind was light and baffling, and the narrowness of the passage made it at all times a difficult operation.

Shouts of joy and triumph rang from the sailors, as they victoriously sailed in with their prize. These shouts were echoed by the party on shore, and all the cannon which had been mounted around the inlet roared forth from their iron throats a welcome to the successful corsairs.

The captured treasure was landed, and safely stowed in the cave ; the dead were buried, and the wounded tended. Then all went on as before, the corsairs awaiting, like wild beasts in their lair, the signal that another enemy, another prey, was in sight.

In a few days the sound of the signal gun is again heard—once again the two ships put to sea ; again those left in the inlet hear the sounds of a distant combat, and, as before, the corsairs return with another prize, and more treasure. In this case, as before, Francis Drake, after having defeated the two vessels he attacked, placed all the prisoners on board one vessel, and taking the other in tow, sailed for the corsairs' nest.

The disabled Spaniard, meanwhile, made the best of her way back to the first port, reporting that they had been attacked and plundered by English corsairs, who had carried off the other ship. Immediately the Spanish ships of war were sent in pursuit ; but on arriving at the place designated, could discover no signs of the pirates. In vain they cruised up and down the coast, and scoured the seas in every direction ; they could not discover their enemy, who lay crouching in his lair, while they themselves were seen from the mountain, and their every movement faithfully signalled.

While, then, the Spanish war-ships careered furiously up and down, the English lay quiet in their retreat ; not that Francis Drake feared to meet and fight the Spaniards, but because he had a project in his head, with which it would at present have interfered. He had now captured and safely brought in two fine Spanish vessels, each carrying twenty cannon, and an immense amount of treasure. He purposed to carry on his depredations for some time longer, until he had collected a fleet of some ten or twelve ships of different sizes, and a still greater quantity of treasure. But what would be the use of a fleet without men to man them ? Francis had thought of that, and knew well that the ranks of his crew must soon be recruited ; for although victorious on every occasion, still their losses were heavy. The young corsair then determined, at the expiration of a month or two, when he had inflicted incalculable damage on the Spanish commerce, amassed immense treasure, and captured sufficient of their ships to form a fleet, to set sail with three of the largest and swiftest for England, well armed, and with a quantity of treasure. With this treasure he purposed purchasing a large quantity of arms, ammunition, and warlike stores, and also engaging at least a

thousand British seamen to return with him to the New World, in search of wealth and glory.

At the first commencement of the predatory attacks of the corsairs, intelligence had been sent off to Spain, and more war-ships demanded. On the receipt of the news at the court of King Philip, he manifested the greatest fury at the audacity of the English; and, while despatching ample reinforcements to protect his possessions in the New World, he also sent emissaries to the English court at London to demand compensation, and that Francis Drake should be declared an outlaw. Meanwhile, the corsairs continued their depredations with impunity, till a vast quantity of treasure, and some twenty Spanish ships were in the inlet.

And now Francis Drake considered that the time had come for the beginning of the end. Eight months had been passed in the Corsairs' Nest, and during that time they had attacked and plundered thirty of the Spanish galleons, twenty of which they had brought into the inlet; they had killed some hundred Spaniards, and had possessed themselves of an immense treasure.

It may be supposed that the English, however fortunate and successful, must have suffered severely in so many battles. Indeed, their numbers were now reduced by nearly one-half, so that it became imperatively necessary to reinforce them, if more were to be done; and Francis Drake had no intention of relinquishing his mission.

Accordingly, having made all the necessary arrangements, he prepared to sail with three vessels for England. He chose the *Nemesis* and two of the swiftest Spaniards, leaving the *Avenger* and the rest of the captured fleet under the charge of Sir Edward Dudley. He resolved to take only about a third of the sailors with him, as he pur-

posed no offensive operations until his return with more men. For safety he relied on his skill, and the swiftness of the three vessels. He purposed remaining in England only a sufficient time to complete his arrangements, and hoped to be back again in about five months. During that time, the English left at the Corsairs' Nest were to remain perfectly quiet, not venturing to commit further depredations until his return. By this means the Spaniards would be thrown off their guard, and the richly-laden galleons, which of late had become rather scarce, would once again cover the seas ; then, with the whole fleet manned and armed, they would make a grand incursion all down the Spanish coast, plundering, burning, destroying.

This was the projected plan of Francis Drake, the English corsair.

All being completed, he sailed forth in the dusk of evening with the three vessels, amid the shouts and cheers of those who were left behind. The breeze was favourable, and the three ships dashed through the foaming waves in the direction of the Old World.

At daylight next morning nothing could be seen of the three ships ; they had safely made their escape, and were far on their way to Old England.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE HOUR OF VENGEANCE.

MORE than two months had passed on, when a large and well-armed Spanish squadron put to sea from the harbour of Santa Marta, under the command of Don José de Castanares, who was now admiral. The object of the expedition was to attack, destroy, and capture the English corsairs, who had so long infested the sea. The retreats of the English had at length been discovered, and it was resolved to attack them in overwhelming force in their fastnesses.

The Spanish fleet comprised twelve large ships of war, and five smaller ones, and carried a crew of six thousand men. What doubt was there that so formidable a force would easily defeat and destroy the corsairs, weakened by many combats?

Don José proposed to force his way into the inlet at all hazards, and at all risks, and to exterminate the band at once and utterly.

The instant that the squadron arrived off the retreat, the signal was given to attack. The Englishmen were prepared for the approach of the enemy, for they had been warned from the look-out on the mountain. They were all determined to resist to the last grasp, although weakened by the loss of many of their number. They could not but look forward gloomily to the result of the approaching combat.

Will and Michael Drake were in command, and had disposed their little forces to the best advantage. The entrance to the retreat was strongly fortified by cannon, but, alas! there was a scarcity of ammunition. Although

the brothers kept it from the men, being unwilling to discourage them, they well knew that their powder would not last for longer than an hour's cannonade ; and after that, what could they expect but defeat and death ? How they prayed for the return of Francis Drake with the promised aid !

The attack was commenced by four of the largest Spanish vessels, which were towed into the inlet by boats. These were met by so warm a cannonade, that, after half-an-hour's fighting, they retired in dismay, their decks strewn with the dead and dying. For a short time there was a cessation of hostilities ; only for a time, however, for fresh ships came to the attack, and again is heard the roar of the cannon, and the rattle of the musketry. With desperate bravery Michael and Will encourage their men, penetrating into the very thick of the fight.

Suddenly, amidst the din of battle, a sailor runs up to Michael, and says some words in a low tone. He has come from the signal-station, and reports that another fleet is coming up. Michael, approaching his brother, who is himself engaged in training a cannon on the foremost ships of the enemy, says gloomily—

“ All is lost ! Fresh ships—another fleet—is coming to the assistance of the Spaniards.”

“ Let it come ! ” replied Will, valiantly. “ We will receive it as we do this. Courage, brother ; the day will yet be ours.”

At this moment, however, an artilleryman comes up, and reports that the powder is failing—they have but ten or twelve more rounds. Meanwhile, ship after ship of the Spanish squadron is brought up to the attack, and nothing is heard on all sides but the shouts of the combatants and the roar of the cannon. The English, protected by their

batteries and earthworks, have hitherto lost but few men, while the slaughter on board the Spaniards has been terrific.

Now, however, foot by foot, the Spanish vessels are advancing into the creek itself. Two have already forced their way in, and are almost beyond the range of the guns. The situation is becoming critical ; for now the English batteries can be attacked in flank.

Don José, on board the *Santissima Trinidad*, has not yet brought his ship into action ; but now he determines himself to lead the attack, and force his way into the corsairs' retreat.

The admiral's ship, and four other of the largest, are now towed ahead towards the creek ; at the same time the terrible fire of the English slackens. Suddenly, however, the sound of cannon is heard from the direction of the sea ; both Spaniards and Englishmen pause for a moment, to ascertain the nature of the firing. The English see with gloom and despair a fleet of ten more vessels at barely a mile's distance, while the Spaniards gaze in perplexity and surprise.

Don José orders the attack to be postponed for a time.

"What can this squadron be ?" he asks in surprise from his lieutenant.

"Doubtless these are vessels sent from Spain."

"Strange that we should not have been apprised of their coming !" said Don José, gazing with doubt and suspicion on the approaching fleet.

Suddenly, while he is still endeavouring to make out the new-comers, a flag is run up to the mizen-peak of each, and the roar of a hundred cannon immediately succeeds. The Englishmen on the heights, after gazing forth in doubt for a moment, scarcely able to believe in their good

fortune, give vent to a tremendous shout of joy and triumph ; for the English ensign floats proudly from the peak of each of the newly-arrived vessels, and they know that it is Francis Drake, with the promised succour.

Don José gives vent to a cry of rage, and immediately orders the attack to recommence. He hopes to defeat the Englishmen in the inlet, and take their batteries, before the other ships can come to their assistance.

Meanwhile, the English squadron, led by a large frigate, commanded by Drake, the dreaded corsair himself, bears down to attack. Without a moment's hesitation, they sail on, and penetrating the Spanish line, close up alongside the largest and most formidable Spanish vessels, and commence pouring in their broadsides. Now is heard the thunder of the English cannon, both in front and rear.

The ship of Don José de Castanares, and two others, have forced their way past the opening of the creek, and are now engaging the batteries, whose fire is almost silenced from want of ammunition. For a moment the battle appears to incline in favour of the Spaniards, for they have forced their way within the retreat. The attack of the English ships now slackens, and one after another the Spaniards are towed in after the vessel of Don José.

This latter, rejoicing in this success, gives the order for all the ships to open fire on the batteries, and then to take them by assault. A tremendous cannonade is opened, without a shot being fired by the English in return. Don José discovers that the batteries are abandoned, and is about to give the order to take possession of them, when the attack is reopened by the English vessels, who now force their way into the inlet after the Spaniards.

Don José now finds that he is caught in a trap, and that it was the policy of the English commander to allow

him to enter. The passage is so narrow at the entrance, that vessels in entering often graze their sides. Advantage is taken of this by the English in the ships to pass kegs of powder to their comrades on shore. In a few moments the fire of the batteries recommences.

Attacked on all sides, the carnage on board the Spaniards is now frightful. The shot, plunging down from the batteries on the heights, in some cases pass right through the decks, and out through the ship's bottoms ; many are already on the point of sinking. The fire from the well-served cannons of the English ships, too, is most destructive—howling amidst the rigging, splintering the timbers, and slaughtering the crews in a frightful manner.

The English ships steadily advance up the creek towards where the Spanish admiral's ship is posted. They leave behind them nothing but helpless and shot-torn wrecks, for in no case has a Spanish ship withstood for more than a minute or two the terrific cannonade of the British.

All the ships of the Spaniards have now been sunk, or have surrendered, except the *Santissima Trinidad*, and the three others who first entered. These have passed on up to the end of the creek, and many of their crews are escaping to the shore. Francis Drake, observing this, presses on to the attack with such of his ships as are least injured in the fight. The English corsair hastens to lay his own vessel alongside of the *Santissima Trinidad*, and the gunners pour a terrible fire into the doomed Spaniard. At that instant the boarding party led by Francis Drake, threw themselves on board, and after a fierce and sanguinary struggle, amid aloud cries and huzzas, the *Santissima Trinidad* surrenders to the young corsair. Don José, the Spanish admiral, perished in the vain at-

tempt to beat back the boarders, thus escaping the vengeance of Francis Drake by an honourable death.

By this time every Spanish ship was sunk or captured, and on all sides might be heard the joyous shouts of the victors. On the poop of the *Santissima Trinidad* were assembled Sir Edward Dudley, Robert Dudley, Michael Drake, and Gideon Glossop. After mutual congratulations upon their fortunate victory, the Corsair gave orders for his men to clean the decks, attend to the wounded, and prepare to put to sea again. Sir Edward Dudley, leading Amy by the hand, approached him.

"Francis," said his friend and patron, "this is no place for this poor child. With your consent, I will take her back with me to England; and when next you see her, you must call her Lady Dudley."

"With all my heart, Sir Edward," said Francis, the tears starting to his eyes. "Take which of the ships you like, and God bless you! And Robert—what of your brother Robert?"

"He goes with me, to seek his bride in Old England."

Francis mused for a moment.

"Sir Edward," he said, "take my sister, and may Heaven smile on you both—may health and happiness be your portion. As for me, I must live for fame, the name of Francis Drake, the Corsair of the Main, shall yet ring in both hemispheres. Take which vessel you please. Once more—adieu!"

Then Amy, with a passionate burst of tears, threw herself on her brother's breast, and bade him farewell.

In an hour's time, Sir Edward Dudley, Robert Dudley, and Amy, sailed forth from the corsairs' retreat, and made sail to Old England. As they passed out into the open

sea, a thundering shout rang forth from the corsairs. Sir Edward Dudley waived his hand in farewell to his companions, and the next moment the vessel is hid by the bluff overhanging rocks from their gaze.

Perhaps some day we may again revisit the Spanish Main, and record the further exploits of Francis Drake, the Corcair, and the "Demons of the Sea."

DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S ORIGINAL and only GENUINE. CHLORODYNE.

COUGHS,
C C COLDS,
STHMA,
A B BRONCHITIS.

DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S
CHLORODYNE. This wonder-
ful remedy was discovered by Dr. J.
Collis Browne, and the word Chloro-
dyne coined by him expressly to
designate it. There never has been a
remedy so vastly beneficial to suffering
humanity, and it is a subject of deep
concern to the public that they should
not be imposed upon by having
imitations pressed upon them on
account of cheapness, and as being
the same thing. Dr. J. Collis
Browne's Chlorodyne is a totally
distinct thing from the spurious com-
pounds called Chlorodyne, the use of
which only ends in disappointment
and failure.

DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S
CHLORODYNE is a Liquid

MEDICINE which ASSUAGES PAIN of
EVERY KIND, affords a calm, re-
freshing sleep WITHOUT HEADACHE,
and INVIGORATES the NERVOUS
SYSTEM when exhausted.

GREAT SPECIFIC for
G C D HOLEIRA, DYSENTERY,
D IARRHŒA.

The GENERAL BOARD OF HEALTH,
London, REPORT that it ACTS as a
CHARM, one dose generally sufficient.

Dr. GIBSON, Army Medical Staff,
Calcutta, states:—"Two Doses COM-
PLETELY CURED ME OF DIARRHŒA."

DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE'S
CHLORODYNE rapidly cuts
short all attacks of
PILEPSY, SPASMS, COLIC,
E

PALPITATION, HYSTERIA.

Is the TRUE PALLIATIVE in
EURALGIA, GOUT,
CANCER,

T OOTHACHE, RHEU-
MATISM.

IMPORTANT CAUTION.
The IMMENSE SALE of this
REMEDY has given rise to many
UNSCRUPULOUS IMITATIONS.

N.B.—EVERY BOTTLE OF
GENUINE CHLORODYNE
BEARS on the GOVERNMENT
STAMP the NAME of the IN-
VENTOR,

DR. J. COLLIS BROWNE.

Overwhelming medical testimony
accompanies each bottle.

SOLD IN BOTTLES, 1s. 1st,
2s. 9d., 4s. 6d., by all Chemists.

SOLE MANUFACTURER—
J. T. DAVENPORT, 33, GREAT
RUSSELL STREET, W.C.

COCOA IN PERFECTION.

Fry's
PURE CONCENTRATED
Cocoa

RECOMMENDED BY THE
HIGHEST MEDICAL AUTHORITIES
FOR ITS

Purity, Solubility and Excellence.

60 PRIZE MEDALS

AWARDED TO
J. S. FRY & SONS, BRISTOL, LONDON AND SYDNEY.

Be careful to ask for Fry's Pure Concentrated Cocoa.

